'Only a miracle can make Senate dance the Cha-cha' Story on PAGE A2

Mike A outside the 'kulambo'

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

JOSE Miguel Arroyo may now feel like "a young buck," but he's likely to stay "outside the *kulambo*."

President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband is resigned to being the

MIKE/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

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GMA, Miriam seal union with kisses

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and her once fiery critic Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday sealed their alliance with kisses and exchanged praise like long-time friends.

The two women appeared together for the first time since Santiago was included in the administration coalition's senatorial slate despite the objections of some members of the ruling Lakas-CMD and civil society groups.

The occasion was the signing of a "covenant of unity" that formalized the K4 coalition composed of Lakas, the Liberal Party and Santiago's People's Reform Party. The ceremony was held at Annabel's restaurant in Quezon City.

Santiago said that Ms Macapagal was "truly a woman of destiny" and that no one had done better for the country in the last three years.

The President said in a succeeding Kilosbayan forum that she chose Santiago over her own party mates by virtue of the latter's being a "good lawyer" and one to whom the people listened.

Lakas stalwarts were loud in their praise of Santiago.

"She has this special gift of gab that will be a big help to GMA in explaining to the masses why she should be elected President," Bulacan Rep. Wilfrido Villarama said.

She "shoots straight," he said of the tough-talking ex-senator. "She hits the bull's eye with her colorful language that can be understood by both PhD and grade school graduates. Her credibility is also legend."

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano said Lakas members were "satisfied" with Santiago's decision to leave the camp of actor Fernando Poe Jr. in favor of the administration.

"The inclusion of an opposition ist like Miriam fulfills the reconciliation theme of the coalition," he said. "Miriam has many followers and can contribute to the coalition's cause. Her candidacy is backed by experience and

GMA/ A4

JOAN BONDOC

SEALED with hugs and kisses, the "covenant of unity" between President Macapagal and ex-Sen.Miriam Defensor-Santiago creates a coalition of three parties.

Decide now, SC urged

EDWIN BACASMAS

ALL HAIL to the Black Nazarene as the image of Jesus Christ bearing His cross leaves Quiapo Church in Manila for the annual procession marked by fervor and frenzy among the devotees estimated to be between 200,000 and 300,000, the largest in recent memory. *(Story on Page A16.)*

Automated or manual? Senators say Comelec running out of time

By Christine O. Avendaño and Martin P. Marfil

SAYING the Commission on Elections had nearly run out of time, senators crossed party lines yesterday to call on the Supreme Court to immediately release its decision on the fate of automated elections.

Both Senate President Franklin Drilon and opposition leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the high court needed to promulgate its forthcoming ruling on the validity of the contract for automatic vote counting right away.

Drilon said ex-Comelec chief Christian Monsod told him the poll body needed 120 days of "lead time" to shift back to the system of manual counting.

This means that the high court has only until next week to issue the decision. "Beyond that the Comelec would no longer have enough time to meet the May 10 deadline," he said at a news conference in the Senate.

Asked whether the Constitution allowed for the postponement of national elections, Drilon said election day cannot be changed "unless provided by law."

He noted that some lawyers were of the view that the Comelec has the authority to postpone the election on its own if there is no time to prepare for manual election, as provided under Section 5 of the Election Code.

"But any postponement must be of such a date that it will allow a proclamation of the winners by June 30 because that would create a constitutional crisis," Drilon reminded.

The Constitution provides that

DECIDE/ A14

Bro. Eddie accuses Palace of harassment

By Blanche S. Rivera and Martin P. Marfil

FOR the first time since he declared his intention to run for president, evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva has linked Malacañang to the "series of harassments" threatening to derail his candidacy.

Villanueva, spiritual director of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide (JIL) and head of Bangon Pilipinas, said last night that Malacañang was pressuring the Commission on Elections to disqualify him from the presidential race.

"I'm beginning to believe that those who are being hurt by my candidacy are behind this... How else can our application [for the accreditation of Bangon Pilipinas as a political party] still be delayed?" Villanueva said in a phone interview.

"I'm appealing to the lieutenants of GMA [President Macapagal-Arroyo] to be a sport and to exercise decency," he added.

The possibility of Villanueva's disqualification surfaced again yesterday when Comelec lawyers said those who would be allowed to run must have political parties.

Some members of the Comelec legal department said they had

BRO. EDDIE/ A4

Firm corners 3 big gov't computer deals

By Tony Bergonia

SPECIAL REPORT

THREE of the government's biggest computerization programs—worth about P10 billion in build-operate-own contracts—have all been awarded to a single consortium. At least one of the contracts was overpriced by P2 billion and suffered serious flaws.

Documents obtained by the INQUIRER showed that the computerization programs of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), the Land Registration Authority (LRA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), are being handled by Stradcom International Holdings Inc. (Stradcom).

Of the three, the LTO program—with an initial cost of P3.533 billion and a timetable of 10 years—is the most problematic. A Commission on Audit report found that the contract for the program had "substantially deviated" from the bid documents and the Build-Operate-Transfer law.

The government awarded the LTO project to Stradcom on Dec. 15, 1997 during the term of President Fidel Ramos.

According to the documents, Stradcom was to install computer software and hardware to speed up and make more efficient the process of issuing drivers' licenses and vehicle registration documents.

The project also sought to help the LTO, the government's fourth-largest revenue earner, implement a Law Enforcement and Traffic Adjudication System (Letas) and a Manufacturers, Assemblers, Importers and Dealers Reporting System (MAIDRS).

On Nov. 9, 1998, President Joseph Estrada issued a memorandum directing the LTO to implement the project.

According to the documents, the project proceeded and payments were made to Stradcom

FIRM/ A14

Lawyer wants FPJ disqualified

By Martin P. Marfil and Christine O. Avendaño

A LAWYER yesterday asked the Commission on Elections to disqualify action star Fernando Poe Jr., who has been leading in all poll surveys, from the presidential race, claiming the actor is not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

But FPJ's camp immediately dismissed the disqualification bid against the hugely popular actor "as politically motivated and a harassment suit to undermine his impending landslide victory in the May elections," insisting that Poe is a Filipino citizen.

"We think that this is meant to cast doubts on Poe's citizenship," said Rod Reyes, head of Poe's me-

LAWYER/ A4

Blind man with vision eyes Senate

By Blanche S. Rivera

HE may have lost his eyesight but apparently not his vision.

Nicanor Gatmaytan Jr. is a blind lawyer who is running for senator in Raul Roco's ticket next May, perhaps the only vision-impaired candidate in the country's electoral history.

Gatmaytan, 56, is running not so much to win but to make a point.

He says he has seen the country go down the tube because of corruption and is offering his vision of a graft-free Philippines.

"If it will take a blind man to open the eyes and minds of those whose eyes and minds have been blinded by power and money, I am willing to be a sacrificial lamb in this election," Gatmaytan said in an interview

BLIND/ A4

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

NICANOR GATMAYTAN: Will it take a blind man to open eyes and minds?

Rationing feared in impending water crisis

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

IT'S NO longer enough to shower with a friend.

Faced with the possibility of water rationing, Manila residents may have to skip baths altogether.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday warned the public about a looming water crisis due to the lack of rains in the last two months. The reservoir level at Angat Dam, Manila's main tap water source, dropped to 201 meters, or slightly off the minimum safe level of 206 meters.

Normally, northern Philippines would have been hit by about two tropical cyclones this season, replenishing water supplies at Angat Dam, but there haven't been any yet.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) was forced to cut by 5 percent the water which it supplies to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). This has affected an estimated 480,000 people, or 80,000 households. It expects the situation to improve with the onset of

RATIONING/ A14

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/10/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

Only a 'miracle' can make Senate dance the Cha-cha, says Drilon

By Michael Lim Ubac and Carlito Pablo

ONLY a "miracle" could make the Senate agree to support House Speaker Jose de Venecia's renewed push for Charter change, Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday.

"Time is against this resolution," said Drilon, explaining that the Senate did not have the time to debate such a highly divisive issue as the senators would be preoccupied with the national budget for the next 16 sessions days.

"We will give highest priority to the budget. To me that is critical because the pay of the uniformed personnel is in the 2004 budget," he told a press conference.

Still, Drilon said he would convene a caucus of the 13-member majority bloc on Monday to come up with a decision on the issue.

De Venecia and other House leaders said they intend to rush passage of a bill that would provide for the simultaneous election in May of delegates to a constitutional convention that would rewrite the Constitution to effect a change to a parliamentary form under a federal system.

De Venecia was buoyed by President Macapagal-Arroyo's including a Charter change plank in her campaign platform and reportedly agreeing to resign midway through a new term—if she wins in May—to pave the way for a parliamentary system in 2007.

The President has also endorsed the proposal for the passage of a Con-con bill.

But Drilon said that the time frame was "very tough."

"Even if, by some miracle, we are able to finish the resolution and pass it in the next week or so, the House has yet to pass its own version because they passed a constituent assembly resolution," he said.

Moreover, the Commission on Elections would need to set a period for the filing of the certificates of candidacy of the delegates, he added.

Even the main proponent of Charter change in the Senate is now having second thoughts about resurrecting the issue at this time.

"I sincerely believe [it] is really critical because it will introduce structural change in government and we need to do that. But again, the question of timing is critical," said Sen. Edgardo Angara.

"Not that I oppose it, not that I'm against it, but plainly we have no time for it. How many session days are left?" he said.

Angara said the only bill that was worth passing now was the national budget.

"If we don't pass the national budget, there will be no elections because the election money is in that appropriations. And since both candidates (President Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr.) anyway expressed interest in constitutional change, then let it be done after the elections," said Angara.

But an insistent De Venecia yesterday called on the Senate to return the gesture made by Malacañang and the House.

"Logic dictates that we respond to the increasing clamor of the people and change this rotten political system," he said.

"We in the House have responded and we're appealing to the Senate to listen to the call of the people," De Venecia said.

He said that the House, the overwhelming majority of which prefer a constituent assembly, had already bent over backwards to accede to the Senate's desire for Charter change via constitutional convention.

If the House has its way, the House and the Senate would convene into a constituent assembly to tackle the job of amending the Constitution.

VIN D' HONNEUR
President Macapagal, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco raise the ceremonial toast during the Vin D'Honneur at the Malacañang Palace. The Palace said 300 guests attended the annual reception for foreign diplomats. VAL HANDUMON

'Nothing beats experience'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

"NOTHING beats experience."

President Macapagal-Arroyo told a forum at the University of the Philippines that she has this advantage over her rivals in the presidential elections in May.

"Among the candidates, I can say that I am in the best position to effect changes because I have gained the power and experience to turn around the economy, and create jobs," the President said in the forum sponsored by Kilosbayan jointly with the University of the Philippine College of Law and the UP Department of Political Science at the Nismed auditorium in UP Diliman.

The President presented her "vision and program of government" and fielded questions from Kilosbayan, UP officials and students.

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga, Kilosbayan president, said Ms Macapagal was the first candidate to be invited to the group's forum this year.

Salonga said Kilosbayan invited action king Fernando Poe Jr. to present his program of government in a forum on Feb. 12 and expressed hope that Poe, like Ms Macapagal, would appear in person to deliver his own platform.

Salonga said he made it clear to Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of the LDP which is backing Poe's candidacy, that Poe should not attend by proxy. He said Angara promised him that Poe would present "not just dreams but concrete programs" of government.

Ms Macapagal, who obtained her economics degree from the state university, enumerated her achievements and programs in the almost three years she has been President. *With a report from Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.*

Spare 2 convicts, GMA asked

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was asked yesterday to stay the execution of two death row inmates who are scheduled for execution on Jan. 30 following the recent lifting of the moratorium on capital punishment.

In two letters sent to Malacañang, Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Chief Persida-Rueda Acosta and PAO lawyer Howard Areza, the inmates' counsel, asked Ms Macapagal to spare the lives of convicted kidnappers Roberto Lara and Roderick Licayan since six of their co-accused have not been arrested.

"Madame President, it would be better off, if we await the outcome of the trial of the other suspects....so that they may also be brought to justice, and not just execute Licayan and Lara just to satisfy the blood lust of our society," Areza said.

The President earlier said she would not stand in the way of the twin executions if only to set an example to kidnap-for-ransom gangs.

This developed as the police arrested in Escalante, Negros Occidental yesterday, Pedro Mabansag, one of the accused and the alleged mastermind of the kidnapping. Mabansag has cleared Lara, his nephew, of involvement in the kidnapping. "He (Lara) was not involved," Acosta quoted Mabansag as saying.

"They should be given the chance to present new evidence," Acosta told reporters at Camp Crame.

Licayan and Lara, a construction worker, were convicted by the Marikina Regional Trial Court on Sept. 9, 1999 for the kidnapping of Chinese businessman Joseph Tomas Co and his assistant Linda Manaysay on Aug. 10, 1998. The Supreme Court affirmed their death sentence on Aug. 15, 2001.

Their other co-accused in the case were Mabansag, Alex Placido, Jojo Sajorco, Allan Placio, Noel delos Reyes, Dodong Adolfo and Benjie Mabansag.

With the arrest of Mabansag, the PAO would ask the Supreme Court to reopen the case, probably next week, Acosta added.

"The reopening of the case therefore is vital in the interest of administering justice to the fullest, and to ferret out the truth behind the kidnapping," Acosta said.

Acosta also urged the President to order the National Bureau of Investigation and the police to arrest the remaining suspects.

Department of Justice officials met yesterday to decide whether to push for the delay in the executions which could be the first since rape convict Leo Echegaray was executed on Feb. 5, 1999.

K-4, opposition, 3rd force candidates court militant party-list group

By Norman Bordadora

CANDIDATES of the administration, opposition and "third force" parties came courting yesterday at the convention of a new militant party-list group, asking for the nod and the votes of organized sectors of the Left.

Former Sen. Raul Roco, presidential standard bearer of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa coalition; Sen. Loren Legarda, vice presidential bet of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino; and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon of the administration's K-4 coalition all called on the Anakpawis party delegates to support their candidacies.

"It's heartening to see the common folk bonding together. It's about time the number of their representatives in Congress increase," Legarda said in her speech before 2,000 or so delegates of various militant peasant, worker and urban poor groups from all over the country.

Veteran labor leader Crispin Beltran, 71, is the chair of the Anakpawis National Political Party whose membership is composed of workers, peasants and urban poor.

Apart from the open endorsement of her vice presidential bid by Communist Party founder Jose Ma. Sison, Legarda appears to have the support of the Anakpawis leadership.

While the party has not endorsed any candidate for a national post, Beltran said the party frowns on the vice presidential candidacy of the administration coalition's Sen. Noli de Castro, Legarda's main rival, because of his supposed ties to the Lopez family, the owners of Meralco.

"High electricity rates and anomalous charges are certain to remain a fact in consumers' lives and even worsen if De Castro and President Macapagal-Arroyo win," he said.

Aside from calling for the junking of Ms Macapagal and De Castro at the polls, Anakpawis also discouraged its members to the other opposition presidential candidate, Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

When his turn at the podium came, Roco noted that since the Anakpawis, which he called a major national political party, had invited only Fernando Poe Jr. and himself, he said the two of them were "the only contenders in the presidential elections."

Beltran said the party has not endorsed any presidential candidate, but it will endorse several candidates running for local positions in the provinces.

He said Anakpawis was open and willing to dialogue with all candidates running for the top offices with the exceptions of the President and Lacson.

He said the party's stand on the senatorial candidates would be on an individual basis, based on their political records and platform.

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GMA, Miriam seal union with kisses

From page A1

a clear nationalist conscience."

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. said Lakas was "holding firm" despite earlier warnings. He said there were no moves to desert Lakas even if Santiago had displaced party spokesperson Heherson Alvarez as K4's 12th senatorial candidate.

The covenant was signed by Speaker Jose de Venecia, Lakas president; Senate President Franklin Drilon, LP chair; and Esperanza Cabral, PRP president.

Drilon said the K4, or Koalisyon ng Karanasan at Katapatan sa Kinabukasan, would be registered with the Commission on Elections as the party to carry the President's entire slate.

ADMINISTRATION alliance is forged on Friday at the Annabel's restaurant in Quezon City. From left, Miriam Santiago, House Speaker Jose de Venecia, President Macapagal, senatorial candidate Mar Roxas and Senate President Franklin Drilon. VAL HANDUMON

Icebreaker

Santiago broke the ice by disclosing that just before the covenant was signed, De Venecia asked her to stay "as close to him as possible despite the presence of his wife [Gina]."

"So I take it to mean that I am welcome in this party unlike in the other party," she said, alluding to Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, which she bolted.

Santiago showed her new partners that she had not lost her fire and was now training it on her former allies in the opposition.

"This is a unique period in Philippine political history. You are witnessing history unfold before your eyes," she said.

She also said that with the Constitution mandating a single six-year term, a president had to spend the first half of the term learning the job.

"But President Macapagal-Arroyo is truly a woman of destiny. Destiny has decreed that she should bring to the Filipino people, when she asked for her own presidential mandate, nothing less but the full and great experience of three years in the presidency itself," Santiago said.

2 questions

She said there were many upheavals against the administration, including questions on why the economy was not as good as expected.

"But the proper question, I submit, is: Could anyone have done better in the light of the development in the global or international economy? I submit the answer is: No, no one could have done better than the President in the last three years," she said.

One mission said the other question was whether people were voting for stability and setting the stage for economic takeoff, or "simply for novelty."

"I presume every Filipino will want to exercise his freedom of conscience on this issue," she said. "But as for me, I chose the side of political stability and, therefore, I chose to ally myself with a leader, President Macapagal-Arroyo."

Santiago declared that the administration slate had one mission: "In the words of the poet, that mission is to seek, to fight, and not to yield. Filipinos of the republic, come to the administration alliance. Let us seek, we are fighting, we will never yield."

Why Miriam

Ms Macapagal rose to shake Santiago's hand, saying: "Miriam, thank you, thank you." They exchanged kisses before taking their seats.

But the President later hurriedly left, scuttling the scheduled press conference where Santiago was to explain her jump to the administration, and proceeded to the Kilosbayan forum at the University of the Philippines.

There, she presented her vision and program of government to the private organization led by former Senate President Jovito Salonga and professors and students of the UP College of Law.

But she was asked why she took in Santiago and other allies of Joseph Estrada.

"Miriam is a good lawyer and the people listen to her," Ms Macapagal said. "[Her] issue with me is not my governance but that I am a *de facto* and not *de jure* [President]. Now, that is for 2001-2004, not for 2004 going onward." *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

Mike A outside ...

From page A1

Invisible Man when the election campaign begins next month so as not to remind voters of "Jose Pidal."

Arroyo yesterday said that while he was physically fit to join his wife on the campaign trail, he had left it to her campaign managers led by Gabriel Claudio to decide whether he should tag along.

"I don't know what they will decide," he said, but noted that he was "always there" when his wife campaigned for the vice presidency in 1998.

And to think that, by his reckoning, he has lost 35 pounds.

"I feel lighter," he crowed. "I feel like a young buck. In maybe three months I'll be back in fighting form."

Arroyo, however, was evasive when asked if he personally preferred to join the President's sorties: "I really don't know. I don't know how they are going to do it this time."

But he insisted that he would not mind if her campaign managers decide to cut him off: "There are many and better things I can do if I'm not with her. But I cannot tell you now because it's the campaign season. It's a secret."

Wary

A member of the President's campaign team said they were wary of Arroyo's being visible because it might rekindle the controversy raised by Sen. Panfilo Lacson last year.

In privilege speeches at the Senate, Lacson had accused the President's husband of laundering campaign funds in bank accounts under the name Jose Pidal, and of having an affair with his secretary.

The ruckus simmered down after Arroyo's younger brother, Ignacio, claimed ownership of the Pidal accounts and stymied the Senate investigation by citing his right to privacy. But since then, the First Couple has rarely been seen together in public.

Michael Defensor, campaign spokesperson of the President, said the matter of Arroyo's participation in the campaign had not cropped up during their brain-storming sessions.

"I think it's an issue between husband and wife," Defensor said. "It's personal, so the President and the First Gentleman should discuss it on their own."

'Dead issue'

But Arroyo thinks the Pidal issue has become a "dead issue" that will not hound his wife in her sorties.

"People know there are no public funds involved; they are all private funds," he said. "So there is no crime, no corruption."

He also said he was prepared for another six years of intrigue and controversy.

And while he is unsure of his role in the President's campaign, he is clear on his target of further bringing down his weight from 210 pounds to 180 after the elections.

As for his shrinking girth, he credited it, not to the Pidal controversy, but to a rigid diet and dancing to the current hit song "Otso Otso."

Bro. Eddie accuses Palace of harassment

From page A1

started to weed out "nuisance" candidates and had completed a study that trimmed the number of presidential candidates from 84 to five.

They named the five as Ms Macapagal, former Sen. Raul Roco, actor Fernando Poe Jr., Sen. Panfilo Lacson and businessman Eddie Gil.

"We based it on a careful study of the certificates of candidacy, their qualifications, whether they are known nationally, are popular, have a political machinery, and their occupation," said a lawyer who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pressure

But the source said they had yet to make a formal recommendation based on their study, which had to be approved by their head, Aleodin Dalaig. The Comelec en banc will then have to deliberate on their recommendation, he said.

"It appears that they are allowing themselves to be pressured by denying us our plan to run," Villanueva warned. "In effect, they are denying the people a better choice. That may create a social crisis."

Appeal to Abalos

He said his lawyers would question the Comelec legal department's recommendation before the proper venue if the decision becomes final.

"I appeal to the chair [Benjamin Abalos Sr.] to exercise judicious judgment by not allowing some vested interest [to intervene]," Villanueva said, adding that the latest development only strengthened public suspicion that Malacañang was pressuring the poll body to act against his candidacy.

But the source from the Comelec legal department said they had noted that some candidates were heads of religious sects, not political parties.

Asked if Villanueva would be disqualified, the lawyer told reporters it was possible. He said that there was a petition to disqualify the evangelist, and that the Comelec would have to decide on the petition.

The lawyer also said Villanueva did not have a political party although his being head of the JIL was of "judicial notice."

"He claims that he has millions of supporters, but the question is: Can he launch a nationwide campaign? Can he put up a machinery of poll-watchers?" the lawyer said.

From 21 to 4

The study of the Comelec legal department also resulted in the trimming of the number of vice presidential candidates from 21 to four.

They are Sen. Loren Legarda, Sen. Noli de Castro, former Rep. Herminio Aquino and Rodolfo Pajo—the running mates, respectively, of Poe, Ms Macapagal, Roco and Gil.

Another lawyer said the weeding-out process of the presidential candidates started with the removal of four who were found short of the required age of 40.

"From their CoCs, we determined whether the entries were made by individuals with sound mind or exhibiting manifest insanity," the lawyer added.

Who Gil?

Based on Comelec records, Gil heads an accredited political party called Partido Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa.

He is into real estate and trading and has a website, www.treasureland.us. He made an unsuccessful bid for a Senate seat in 1998.

"My party has been accredited for six years now," Gil said in a phone interview.

He named Pajo as his running mate but said there was a chance that he might take in another before Jan. 15.

Gil's party has filed a complete senatorial slate that includes actress Pilar Pilapil and ex-Constabulary chief Ramon Montano.

Lawyer wants FPJ disqualified

From page A1

dia bureau, of the disqualification petition.

In a seven-page petition, lawyer Victorino X. Fornier said that Poe should be disqualified since he is not a natural-born Filipino citizen as the actor's parents were both foreigners.

Fornier said that Poe's father, Allan F. Poe, had Spanish parents and that Allan had admitted in his marriage certificate that he was a Spanish citizen when he got married to one Paulita Gomez on July 5, 1936.

At the same time, Fornier alleged that Poe's mother, Bessie Kelley, was an American as can be seen in Poe's birth certificate.

According to Reyes, Poe's citizenship is already a long-resolved legal issue as proven by the issuance of a Philippine passport to Poe by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

In a phone interview, Reyes noted that the DFA would not have issued a passport to Poe if it were not certain of his Filipino citizenship.

"FPJ is probably even more Filipino than the other candidates," Reyes said. "This is already an old issue that was first raised when FPJ started rating in the surveys and quickly died down when it was learned that the DFA had issued him a passport."

The Bureau of Immigration earlier declared that Poe is a Filipino citizen.

According to Fornier, Allan Poe married Paula Gomez on July 5, 1936 at the Convento de Santo Domingo in Intramuros and then supposedly married Kelley, an American, sometime after that. Gomez then filed a case of bigamy and concubinage against Allan Poe.

"Having been born out of void marriage, respondent Poe is an illegitimate child of Allan Poe and Bessie Kelley. Consequently, the citizenship of respondent Poe follows that of his mother, Bessie Kelley, who is undeniably an American citizen," he said.

Fornier cited the 1935 Constitution which he said was applicable at the time of Poe's birth.

Reyes said he is confident that the disqualification case filed against Poe will not prosper and will once again boomerang on Poe's opponents.

Blind man with vision eyes Senate

From page A1

at his Quezon City office.

The office, which also serves as Gatmaytan's residence, is a three-story building which he proudly calls the fruit of his 30 years' labor. This is where he lives with his wife and two children.

Gatmaytan has *retinitis pymentosa*, an incurable progressive eye disease in which the cells of the nerves supplying blood to the retina die. He had preventive eye surgery in 1976 but this did not help his condition.

Practising lawyer

Despite his blindness, Gatmaytan has continued to practice law which he has done since passing the bar in 1974.

He heads his own law firm and says he has a "full system" in place to assist him when he goes to court.

This system includes a reader to go through various reading materials and six associates who review documents that are too voluminous for him. He also depends a lot on recorders, which help him in studying cases and proceedings.

He says he tries not to let his clients and court personnel, including the judge, immediately know of his disability to avoid being discriminated against.

In the familiar confines of his office, Gatmaytan can very well make people believe he is not a vision-impaired lawyer, moving around confidently, knowing exactly where to sit guests, pick up the phone, and where certain books or papers are placed.

"I don't want them to be turned off. I want them to see me perform first ... Some people think that you are less capable if you are blind ... because they associate visual impairment with mental retardation," he says.

Gatmaytan apparently has proven himself to clients as he has successfully litigated some sensational cases. He was the private prosecutor in the Dennis Venturina case, and succeeded in convicting several students from the University of the Philippines accused of killing law student Venturina in the aftermath of a fraternity rumble.

Degrees from UP

The blind litigant is himself a graduate of the UP Law School and is also a fraternity member having joined the Sigma Rho fraternity. He obtained his degree in Economics also from UP.

He still had full use of his eyesight when he was a university student. He went to school without need of assistance, hung out with friends at night, read books, and yes, even figured in a fraternity rumble.

"I wanted to lead a normal life. I knew that I was going to go blind one day so it was just a matter of acceptance," he says.

It was while in law school that his eyesight began to deteriorate. He managed to cross the street only when he could see the shadows of pedestrians. He went home in a taxi every night and used lamp posts as a guide to get around his neighborhood.

By the time the bar exams came, Gatmaytan could barely read texts in full. He could not finish reading the questionnaires and thought that he would flunk.

Family support

"I wanted to quit. That was the hardest thing. But I had so much support from family and friends that I had to keep going," he recalls.

His brothers read to him as he reviewed for the bar. He also remembered his late father had encouraged him to become a lawyer so that he would not be easily duped the way his parents were cheated out of their inheritance.

He miraculously passed the bar, worked for 14 years in the Dakila Castro law office before setting up his own firm.

Taunted

Court trials, however, became a personal trial as he would be taunted for being blind.

He once filed grave oral defamation charges against a judge who mocked him openly when he requested that the court transcript be read aloud for his benefit.

Gatmaytan flew to the United States in 1985 to get a license to practice in New York. He and his first wife—who was also a lawyer and who later divorced him—wanted to secure a fallback as the Philippines degenerated into anarchy during the Marcos regime.

He considers his 30-year stint in private law his greatest feat because not only does it feed his family it also serves as an inspiration to the able-bodied lawyers to persevere and make a name for themselves.

Longs for gov't service

But he has longed to serve in government for the past 10 years, and recently applied as associate justice of the Court of Appeals but was not selected.

He also ran for congressman as an independent in Quezon City's first district in 1992 and placed fifth in a field of 12.

As an active advocate and founding member of the United League for the Advancement of the Blind, Gatmaytan was also chosen as the first nominee of the party list group Alyansa ng may Kapansanan sa Pilipinas in 1998. But the group did not get enough votes to gain a seat in Congress.

Gatmaytan, who was earlier tapped to represent his party list group again in the May elections, was convinced by Roco to join his senatorial slate. They filed their candidacy last Dec. 30.

As a senatorial candidate, Gatmaytan tries to convince the disabled that not all candidates will exploit the cause of the marginalized to be elected. He wants to offer hope that the country can rise from the ashes and regain its integrity.

Equal chance

He says he is not merely running but fighting for a cause. He wants to address corruption in government and amend the Omnibus Election Code to ensure that all candidates would have an equal chance to present their agenda to the public.

He traces corruption to the fact that most politicians are beholden to their sponsors during elections and tend to repay them with plum government posts or deals.

"Here I am blind, and I cannot stomach the corruption in government. How can you take it, you who can see and hear?" he asks.

Try new faces

"We are not going down the drain, we are already in the drain. If we don't do anything, we will decay. And what about our children? What kind of country, of system will they have?" he says.

He says it is wrong to say that experience is the key or the only teacher.

"I hope you try the new faces in politics. We need a new [kind of] politics in the Philippines. Forget the old ones, you know what they have done or not done. Keep on trying until the right one comes along," he says.

Gov't eyes peace talks before polls

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IN A bid to ensure peaceful elections in May, Malacañang hopes to start formal peace talks with both communist rebels and Muslim secessionists in the first quarter this year.

Teresita Deles, presidential adviser on the peace process, said President Macapagal-Arroyo hopes the peace talks would start before the elections to avoid the escalation of violence and "make the elections a more free and open exercise for all our people."

"I am very hopeful that before elections, we would have achieved a certain measure of progress in the peace talks. Whether that's already an agreement that will finally end the cessation of hostilities or not, we don't know," Deles said.

Announcement soon

Deles said government peace negotiators were at the "endpoint of an agreement to start formal negotiations within the first quarter this year."

Deles said the government would make a formal announcement next week.

Reacting to Malacañang's peace bid, the military said yesterday it would support the peace talks between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

"The AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) will support whatever political decisions that will be made by Malacañang related to the peace talks," Col. Danilo Lucero, AFP Public Information Office chief, told defense reporters yesterday.

But Lucero said they have yet to receive the directive from Malacañang on the resumption of peace talks with the CPP-NPA.

Formal peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front, the political front organization of the CPP-NPA, were suspended in June 2001 by the President following the assassinations of House Reps. Marcial Punzalan and Rodolfo Aguinaldo by communist death squads.

Malaysia, Norway

Like the peace talks with Muslim rebels that were brokered by Malaysia, Deles said Norway would act as go-between in the peace talks with the NDF.

Deles said the government was also discussing with the Malaysian government on the final date of the start of peace talks with the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Kuala Lumpur.

Deles said the government has so far been satisfied with the ceasefire it declared with the MILF and NPA despite a number of hitches. But both parties have been quick to resolve their differences by maintaining their lines of communication open.

Campaign fees

In its talks with the NDF, Deles said the government was most likely to raise the issue over the rebels' forced collection of campaign permits from candidates entering their strongholds.

Talks with the MILF, Deles said, have been delayed because of the changes in leadership in the separatist group and in the host country. *With Alcuin Papa*

NPA force waning but influence growing–AFP

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY yesterday admitted that while the strength of the communist New People's Army (NPA) is waning, its influence in the countryside has been expanding.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Danilo Lucero said that communist guerrillas remain a serious problem in the Philippines despite battlefield losses over the past year.

The NPA, one of the longest-running left-wing insurgencies in Southeast Asia, saw its ranks decline to about 8,800 at the end of 2003 compared with 9,200 a year earlier, Lucero told reporters.

Over the same period, government forces killed or captured 875 communist guerrillas, including four guerrilla front leaders, and seized 321 firearms in 299 clashes, while clearing 246 of 2,500 villages of rebel activity, he added.

However, Lucero said the NPA remained in 107 "guerrilla fronts," or areas of operation, and that its arsenal had increased slightly to 6,133 firearms compared with 6,120 a year earlier.

The rebels focused on "strengthening and multiplying their front organizations as their political support for their armed struggle," Lucero said.

"The NPA's atrocities have declined last year compared to 2002. This is because their intelligence-propaganda-organizational (IPO) work have increased in their efforts to strengthen their national front organizations," Lucero said.

Last year, the Armed Forces of the Philippines raided the PICOP area in the Caraga region and recovered over 100 high-powered firearms from the NPA.

"The NPA is involved in strengthening and multiplying their front organizations as their political support for their armed struggle," Lucero explained.

AFP chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said in December they are targetting 165 more barangays for recovery by government forces.

The NPA is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines and has been branded by the United States, the European Union and other countries as a terrorist organization. *With AFP report*

Diplomats: Peace and order RP's biggest challenge

THE COUNTRY'S diplomatic community yesterday said the Macapagal administration's goal to maintain peace and order in the country continues to be its biggest challenge.

In his remarks at the traditional Vin d'Honneur at the Rizal Hall of Malacañang Palace, Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco, dean of the diplomatic corps, said: "One of the more urgent tasks and challenges we have today is the quest for peace."

"It is a necessary condition and a supreme objective that demands greater individual, national, regional and worldwide commitment in order to achieve the common good," Franco said.

"It takes only just one to create conflict, but it is the responsibility of everyone to achieve a lasting peace," the papal nuncio said.

Franco noted that the past year "has had more than its fair share of ups and downs, lights and shadows." "At one time, the world had to anxiously hold its collective breath in the face of terrorists, strife, disease, international calamities, criminality and poverty," Franco said.

RP to buy 20 'old' choppers from Singapore

THE PHILIPPINES is buying 20 refurbished helicopters from a Singapore defense contractor, the Air Force said yesterday, in a $12-million deal that will bolster the region's weakest military force.

Singapore Technologies Aerospace, Southeast Asia's largest aviation service company, is expected to deliver the first batch of three upgraded versions of the US-built UH-1H helicopters in March, air force spokesperson Major Restituto Padilla told Reuters.

The Philippines will get at least three helicopters, which dates from the Vietnam War era, every month until all 20 are delivered by the end of this year.

"This is the best deal we can get considering our limited resources," Padilla said. "These are not brand new aircraft but they will be better because of night-flying capabilities."

The UH-1H is the workhorse of the Philippine military, performing medical and casualty evacuations, troop transport and close air support on operations against a host of Muslim and communist rebel groups.

The air force already has about 60 UH-1Hs, all acquired from the United States under a foreign military sales program, but less than 30 are in flying condition.

Padilla said the funds for the helicopter transfer deal were drawn from the $3 billion military modernization program, but that only $90 million was available for disbursement.

Singapore Technologies Aerospace beat out three other bidders and has agreed to provide maintenance and after-sales service for the helicopters over the next two years.

"Yes, we did make a bid for the tender," Audrey Tan, a spokesperson for the defense contractor, told Reuters. "We are still waiting to hear back from the Philippine government."

Singapore Technologies Aerospace's regional marketing director Anthony Tan said it was still awaiting the final award.

Padilla said the contract was awarded on Dec. 2 but required a "notice to proceed" from Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Gen. Narciso Abaya, the military's chief of staff.

"This is a done deal. The President has already given her approval," Padilla said, adding that Singapore had also obtained approval from the United States for the helicopter transfer.

He said all defense equipment made by US companies need an end-user certificate before being transferred to a third party.

The Philippines is also getting 10 UH-1Hs from Washington under the US Excess Defense Article program, but Manila will pay $8 million for their refurbishment.

The 10 helicopters are in addition to 20 UH-1Hs that US President George W. Bush promised to President Macapagal-Arroyo when she visited Washington in May 2003. *Reuters*

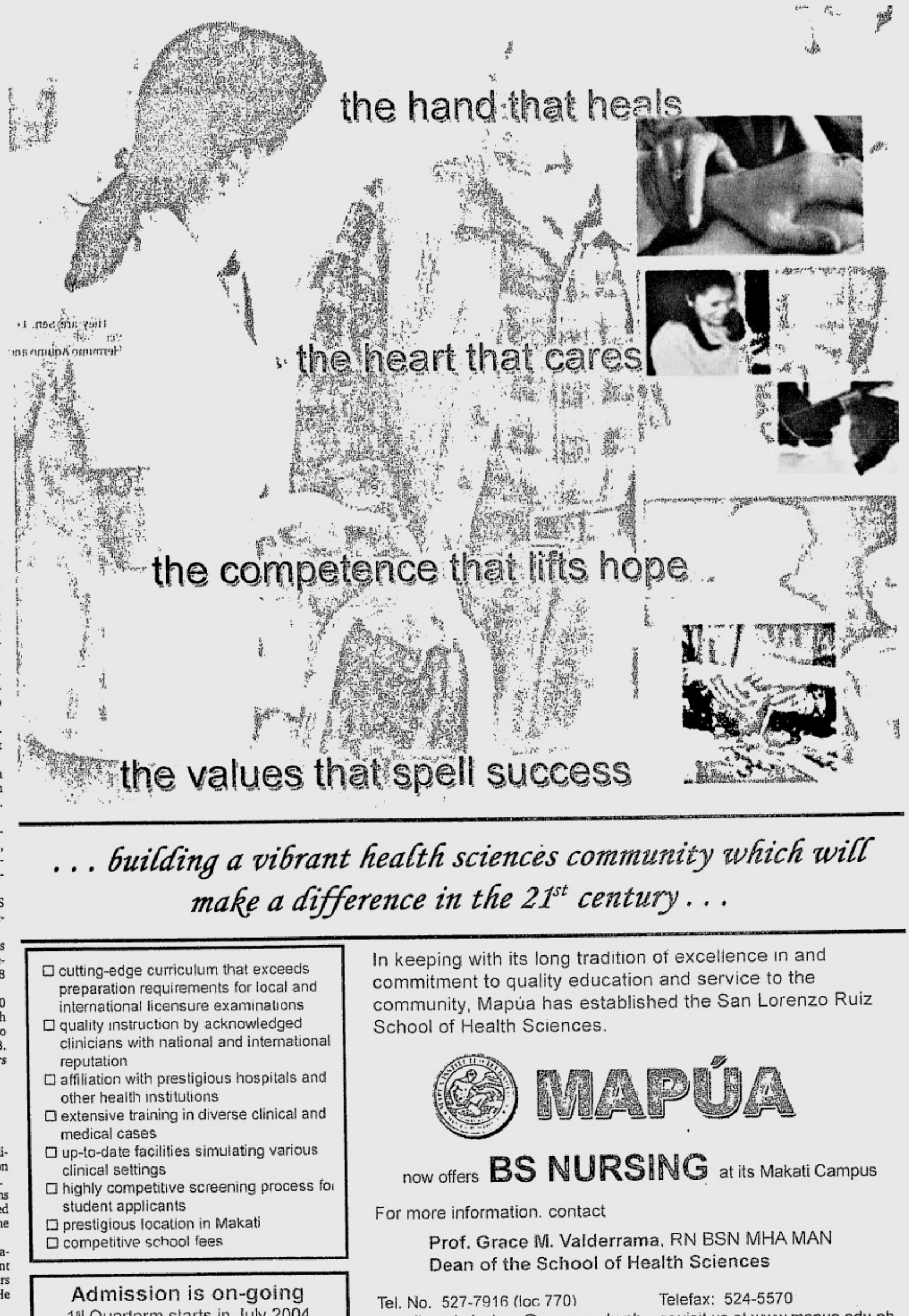
Huey helicopter crashes in Cebu

CEBU CITY—A Philippine Air Force Huey helicopter crash landed at the South Reclamation Project (SRP) in Cebu City yesterday afternoon.

Lt. Col. Romulo Pobre, director for operations of the PAF 250th Tactical Helicopter Wing based in Mactan Benito Ebuen Airbase, said two of the four persons on board suffered minor injuries.

The four were identified as Captain Morada, the instructor pilot; 1st Lieutenant Aquino, student pilot; and two crew members Staff Sergeants Demata and De Guzman. He could not say who among them were hurt.

The Aif Force is now investigating the accident. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*



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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Hotel, chopper, plane attacked in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Guerrillas fired rockets at a Baghdad hotel on Friday, a day after a Blackhawk helicopter crash killed all nine US troops aboard and a C-5 transport plane returned to the capital's airport after coming under fire.

In Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, north of Baghdad, hundreds of US troops conducted overnight raids across the city, capturing 13 loyalists of the former regime who are suspected to be behind attacks on coalition forces.

No one was hurt in the dawn attack on the Burj al-Hayat hotel in central Baghdad, which is used mainly by foreign businessmen and US army contractors. Three rockets hit rooms around the fourth floor, smashing windows, security guards said.

The guards said they exchanged fire with men in a car as the hotel came under attack.

"I was sleeping when I heard a couple of explosions and the Kurdish guards yelling," said Steve Senter, an American military contractor.

On Thursday, scores of soldiers had a narrow escape when the C-5 Galaxy military transport plane, one of the world's largest aircraft, returned safely to Baghdad airport after what was possibly a missile hit.

Officials said the plane, carrying 63 passengers and crew, was hit by ground fire soon after takeoff from Baghdad, causing an explosion in one of its four engines.

A military official in Washington said a missile might have struck the transporter. The US military said later that guerrillas appeared to have hit the plane but that it was not clear what weapon they used.

The attacks come after a relative lull in violence in Baghdad following a New Year's Eve car bomb attack which killed eight people in one of the city's most popular restaurants.

In the town of Falluja west of Baghdad, a bastion of anti-US guerrilla activity, a Blackhawk helicopter crashed on Thursday, but it was not clear whether it was shot down.

Nine soldiers were on board and all were killed, the military said.

One witness said he saw the helicopter in flames before it came down and news reports said it appeared to have been hit by a rocket. The US military said it was investigating the cause.

The setbacks came on the day the US military freed 60 Iraqis after announcing an amnesty intended to ease resentment at the US occupiers' detention of thousands of guerrilla suspects.

The prisoners freed on Thursday had been held in Abu Ghraib jail near the capital, which once housed Saddam's enemies, but officials would not confirm if they were released under the amnesty announced by US administrator Paul Bremer.

He said on Wednesday that detainees rounded up since April who did not have "bloodstained hands" would be freed to promote reconciliation. *Reuters*

A US Army Blackhawk helicopter takes off on patrol over the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on Jan. 7. A Blackhawk helicopter came down in Iraq Thursday, killing all nine US soldiers aboard. REUTERS

US deaths in Iraq near 500, surpass others

BAGHDAD—The number of American troops who have died in Iraq since the war began last March is nearing 500, more than US losses in many regional conflicts of the past several decades: the Gulf War, Lebanon, Somalia, Panama, Grenada, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

So far the Iraq conflict has cost the lives of 494 American service members, including nine who were killed Thursday in the crash of a Blackhawk medivac helicopter believed shot down near Fallujah. Most of the deaths—both combat and non-combat—have occurred since President George W. Bush declared an end to major fighting on May 1.

Among coalition partners, the British military has 55 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Bulgaria, five; Thailand, two; Denmark, Ukraine and Poland have reported one each.

Already, the loss of American life in Iraq has surpassed the US death toll of the first Gulf War of 1991, when about 315 Americans died in the operation to drive Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait. That figure includes combat and non-combat deaths suffered during the military buildup and the war itself.

Ninety-nine American troops have been killed in the ongoing operation in Afghanistan, less than a third of them by hostile fire.

The number of American battle deaths since the Iraq war began on March 20—at least 333—is approaching the figure of 385 Americans killed in action during the Spanish-American War of 1898-1899.

US officials dismiss most of the attacks by Iraqi insurgents as militarily insignificant, and the Bush administration strongly defends the US role in Iraq. Bush said during a visit to London in November that the failure to build democracy in Iraq "would throw its people back into misery and turn that country over to terrorists who wish to destroy us." *AP*

Bush 'systematically' exaggerated Iraq arms threat, think-tank says

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's administration "systematically" exaggerated the threat presented by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD), according to a report released Thursday by an influential Washington think-tank.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace said the United States also misrepresented the findings of UN weapons inspectors in a bid to justify its case for war against Iraq last year.

Bush used Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs as the main case to the United Nations for military action against Iraq. Several countries, led by France, Germany and Russia opposed the US-led war and the divisions have left deep diplomatic scars.

"Administration officials systematically misrepresented the threat from Iraq's WMD and ballistic missile programs," said the report titled "WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications."

Secretary of State Colin Powell said in reaction that he remained confident in the case against Iraq he put to the UN Security Council.

"I am confident of what I presented last year, the intelligence community is confident of the material they gave me," Powell told a press conference.

The Carnegie foundation said however that the US intelligence community "appears to have been unduly influenced by policymakers' views."

The foundation said the US government should enlist United Nations help to draw up "a complete history and inventory" of Iraq's WMD and missile programs and establish an independent commission to establish what intelligence services knew about Iraqi weapons.

It said the United States should also revise its national security strategy allowing preemptive wars.

The 100-page report took six months to compile and examined claims made by the White House in the run up to the March 20 invasion that ousted former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

The Carnegie said the US administration misrepresented UN "inspectors findings in ways that turned threats from minor to dire." It said inspections by UN weapons experts "were on track to find what was there" and that international sanctions and import/export controls were "considerably" more effective than was thought.

The foundation said there was "no solid evidence" to back administration claims of a close relationship between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. *AFP*

PRICEY EGG The 15th Anniversary Egg, shown here, a Fabergé Imperial Easter Egg presented by Tsar Nicholas II to his wife the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna at Easter 1911, is estimated to sell for $10-$15 million at an auction on April 20-21. REUTERS

'Miracle' man rescued from Iran quake rubble

BAM, Iran—A 56-year-old man has been pulled alive from the rubble of the Bam earthquake in southwest Iran, 13 days after the tragedy, medics said Thursday morning.

The man, identified only as Jalil, was in a coma at a Ukrainian field hospital, an Iranian doctor said.

"We are not sure he will be saved. One whole part of his body is cold," the doctor said. An AFP correspondent saw Jalil breathing with the aid of a respirator.

An Iranian search and rescue team found him alive Wednesday night. He apparently survived due to the fact he was under a piece of furniture, which formed an air pocket allowing him to breathe.

Iranian state media has reported a number of "miracle" survivors after rescuers had all but abandoned hope of finding more people alive, including a 97-year-old woman.

One of the World Health Organization's top officials sent to Bam to help coordinate relief efforts said he doubted other people would be pulled alive from the rubble.

"It is very unlikely that in the cold of the night—which is sometimes minus five (Celsius, 23 Fahrenheit)—and the heat of the day—which goes up to 15, 16 degrees—that there will be many more survivors," David Heymann, an infectious disease expert, told a news conference in Geneva, where the WHO is based.

The discovery of any survivors in this particular earthquake had been rare due to the design of most houses in the city, which had a heavy roof that collapsed when the tremor started, said Heymann. *AFP*

Next, manned missions to Moon, Mars

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush is ready to announce new goals for the US space program next week, that could include manned missions to the Moon and beyond, US government officials said late Thursday.

In the wake of the successful landing of the Spirit mission on Mars, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters Bush would have an announcement about the space program next week, confirming weeks-old rumors on the matter.

The spokesperson did not go into details, but National Aeronautics and Space Administration sources said the plan could call for resuming manned lunar missions by around 2015 and to use the Moon as a springboard for putting people on Mars or even beyond at a later date.

Nasa spokesperson Glenn Mahone said Bush was expected to unveil the ambitious plan on Wednesday at Nasa headquarters in Washington.

The new blueprint for space exploration was drawn up by Vice President Dick Cheney, Nasa Administrator Sean O'Keefe and representatives from the defense department and other government agencies, Nasa officials said.

They said the plan calls for retiring the aging space shuttle fleet by 2010 and scaling back US involvement in the International Space Station after it is completed by 2013.

Nasa would develop an orbital space plane to ferry crews and cargo to the ISS—a prototype could be ready by 2008, which could be later adapted for longer voyages to the Moon and Mars, Nasa officials said. *AFP*

91 journalists killed in deadly 2003

SYDNEY—The Iraq war helped make 2003 a dangerous year for journalists, with 91 killed, most of them covering conflict or corruption, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said here Friday.

The number of fatalities was 23 percent higher than the previous year and took place in more than 25 countries, the federation said in a statement from its Australian-based president, Christopher Warren.

Citing an IFJ report titled "Media Casualties in the Field of Journalism and Newsgathering," Warren said many of the deaths were due to war, although assassinations and simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time were to blame in some cases.

"The impact of war and conflict on the work of news media cast a long shadow over journalism in 2003," said Warren, who is also the federal secretary of Australia's Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

"War in Iraq, conflict in Columbia, violence in the Philippines left journalists dead in a year marked by growing anger within media circles over the targeting of journalists," Warren said.

The IFJ said 18 journalists were killed in Iraq, excluding two—Fred Nerac and Hussein Osam—who are still missing and presumed dead in a skirmish near Basra in March.

It called for independent investigations into seven of the confirmed deaths in Iraq, cases which it said showed the need for greater protection of journalists in areas of conflict.

The IFJ also highlighted instances where journalists were targeted for trying to expose political corruption, such as the case of Alfonso Parada of the Columbian El Tempo who was shot by unknown gunmen in March 2003. He was known for reporting on corruption.

Also targeted was Filipino radio journalist Juan Porras Pala, shot dead outside a friend's home in September, the IFJ said. Porras Pala presented a daily radio program on local station dxGO that harshly criticized some local politicians and communist rebels. *AFP*

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

PNP chief says 'jueteng' issue used vs Gloria

DAVAO CITY—Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, Philippine National Police chief, on Thursday admitted that the jueteng issue has been damaging the police and the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo as a whole.

But Ebdane said what the police fear is that critics of President Macapagal would capitalize on the jueteng issue, which drove former President Joseph Estrada out of office, to topple the government.

Because of this, he said, the police have been exerting efforts to put a stop to jueteng.

"We were concerned because it's becoming an issue against the (Macapagal) administration and we don't want that to happen," Ebdane told the INQUIRER here on Thursday.

Ebdane flew in and met with Bishop Fernando Capalla, the new president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

During their closed-door meeting held at the Pearl Farm Resort in the Island Garden City of Samal, Ebdane said the police wanted to forge a covenant with the Roman Catholic hierarchy for a concerted drive against the illegal numbers game.

"We've got to involve other sectors like the Church in gathering information about places with illegal gambling and from our side we will act on that report," he said.

Ebdane said Capalla was supportive of the campaign but the bishop has to consult with other Church leaders first before entering into a covenant with the police.

He said Capalla had agreed to another meeting on Jan. 15.

But in a statement from Malacañang, the President said she lauded the PNP and the CBCP for entering into an agreement to stop jueteng and another illegal numbers game, masiao.

The agreement, said the statement, was signed by Ebdane and Capalla.

The agreement said the PNP and the Church acknowledged "the need for a more effective cooperation and focused effort between the law enforcement agencies and the community."

The statement said with the CBCP taking a more pro-active role, parish priests and parishioners may help in the anti-jueteng campaign by providing information through the local police and furnishing copies of these reports to the Department of Interior and Local Government.

The PNP, under the agreement, pledged to immediately act on the reports and take them to "the proper line of authority."

Under the agreement, the CBCP will be given the task of issuing certificates of non-existence of illegal gambling in various dioceses and archdioceses. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Kidnap mastermind clears convict

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A Negrense on death row for kidnapping may yet be spared the lethal injection late this month.

Church and local officials have asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to stay the execution of Roberto Lara, 33, after he was absolved by his uncle of his alleged involvement in the kidnapping of a Chinese national in Marikina City in 1998.

Pedrito Mabansag, 60, who was tagged as the mastermind in the kidnapping, said his nephew had nothing to do with the abduction.

He said Lara and Roderick Licayan were ejected from the house of his daughter Mary Jane when the alleged kidnap victim was brought there.

Mabansag also denied participation in the kidnapping.

Representatives Monico Puentevella of Bacolod City and Jose Carlos Lacson of Negros Occidental third district, Talisay City Mayor Anthony Lizares and Bishop Vicente Navarra asked President Macapagal to hold in abeyance the execution of Lara pending the review of his case.

Puentevella said he informed the President yesterday of Mabansag's arrest and asked her to stay the execution.

"The President told me she would look into (it) and let justice take its course," he said.

Mabansag was arrested yesterday by the 6th Regional Mobile Group led by Supt. Inocentes Capuno at Sitio Lanipga, Barangay Magsaysay, Escalante City, 102.1 kilometers north of here.

His arrest was made on the strength of a warrant issued by Marikina Regional Trial Court Judge Ruben de la Cruz for kidnapping for ransom.

Benilda Lara said her son did not know the Chinese national, who had been kidnapped and kept in the house of Mabansag in Marikina City.

Benilda said her son was tortured by police into confessing.

Aside from Mabansag, Licayan and Lara, the other accused in the case were Alex Placido, Jojo Sahorgo, Alan Plasio, Noel de los Reyes, Benjie Mabansag who recently died of tuberculosis, and Dodong Adolfo.

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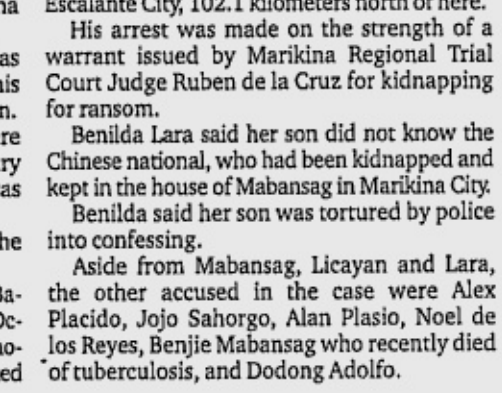

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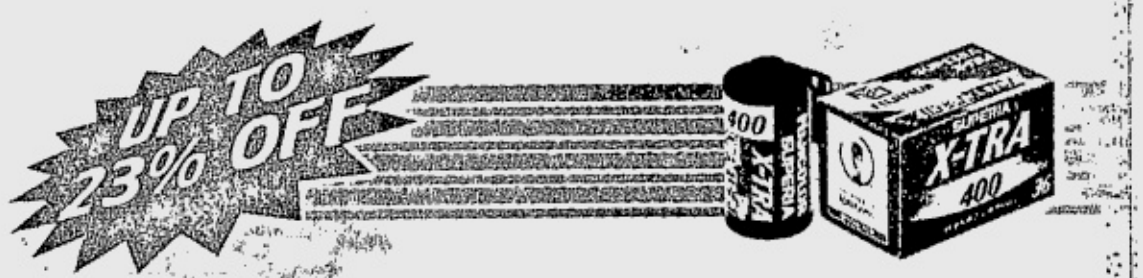

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Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

SAGAYAN
The eyes say it. Maranao children appear tense minutes before they are to publicly perform the Sagayan, or war dance, a traditional dance of the Moro people.

PHOTO

Women shy away from poll race in Cordillera

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By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
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ILOILO CITY—The Korean Electric Power Company (Kepco) will shelve the construction of a 100-megawatt coal-fired plant in Iloilo if it fails to get the approval of the Iloilo provincial board by Jan. 20.

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MOA

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Armada pointed out that it is the governor who executes a MOA if given the authority by the provincial board. Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. has not declared his stand on the issue but has created a technical committee to come up with recommendations.

Doubtful

"It is doubtful if we could enter into a MOA (with Kepco) by Jan. 20," Armada told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said the board would still come up with its collective stand on the project before the end of the month. "They should not issue any ultimatum because they should respect our processes," said Armada.

Ma. Geobelyn Lopez, spokesperson of the People's Response for the Protection of the Environment (Protect), said the Kepco deadline "shows that they are not taking seriously the environmental concerns the people have been raising."

Priest convicted of sex offense runs for mayor

BAGUIO CITY—A priest, who was convicted by a municipal trial court in October for sexual misconduct, is seeking the mayoral post in his hometown in Benguet.

Fr. Nardo Cayat, who has been spending his probation at the vegetable town of Buguias since his Oct. 3 conviction, filed his certificate of candidacy on Monday, "barely beating the deadline," a Commission on Elections official said.

An independent, Cayat is running against administration candidate Thomas Rufino Palileng.

"Cayat surprised his town because he brought shame to (Buguias) when he returned there last year. His townmates sent us a copy of his certificate of candidacy hoping we could contest it in Baguio," said a source close to the woman who had sued the priest.

Bishop Carlito Cenzon of the Baguio-Benguet Catholic vicariate and the local association of priests here suspended Cayat last year and sent him to Buguias to allow the Commission on the Clergy to investigate this latest sex scandal to rock the Catholic Church.

The same commission has reassigned three other priests to the Cordillera interior towns after they were linked to sexual misconduct, the INQUIRER learned.

Cayat's candidacy has fueled debates among Ibaloi and feminist groups that have been monitoring the priest's activities since his Oct. 3 conviction for "forcible acts of lasciviousness." He was sentenced to four months in prison.

But he had obtained a suspended sentence and is now on probation in Buguias, according to a Parole and Probations Administration official.

During the court trial, Cayat admitted that he had made sexual advances on a female volunteer to "rescue" her "from sin."

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The feminist group Innabuyog, an affiliate of the Gabriela party-list group, in a statement criticized the election law that allows convicts to run for public office without "clear rules of disqualification." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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They said should Golden Swan acquire a permit to carry liquefied gas, it would set a bad precedent for other ships that lack adequate facilities and equipment to carry toxic substances. *With Inquirer Research report*

Solon seeks to disqualify Samar rival

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Reelectionist Rep. Reynaldo Uy has filed a disqualification case against former Public Estate Authority board member Rodolfo Tuazon, his rival in Samar's first district congressional race.

Uy told the Commission on Elections in his petition that Tuazon's certificate of candidacy should be cancelled because "he is perpetually disqualified to hold any public office."

He said an administrative order issued by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo had perpetually disqualified Tuazon and other PEA officials from holding government posts after they were found guilty of graft in connection with the highly irregular Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard.

Uy filed the petition in Catbalogan, Samar on Jan. 6, a day after Tuazon filed his CoC under the banner of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Tuazon was first district congressman from 1992 to 2001 and was appointed PEA board. Tuazon was appointed PEA board member early 2002.

On Nov. 19, government workers of Calbayog filed a plunder case against Tuazon for allegedly accumulating P90 million in unexplained wealth and lying in his Statement of Assets and Liabilities (SAL).

Tuazon denied the allegations, saying they were politically motivated.

"That is pure political harassment. The decision is not yet final (because) I filed . . . a motion for reconsideration . . .," he told the INQUIRER.

Federico Catalino, Samar election supervisor, said he would give Tuazon five days to answer the petition then send it to the main Comelec office in Manila.

The case stemmed from allegations that the road project was highly overpriced and some PEA officials made money out of the deal.

Tuazon resigned from the PEA on Oct. 30, 2002, more than two months before Malacañang issued the decision.

He said Uy should be disqualified, too, based on a conviction on a nepotism case.

American says cops planted evidence on drug charges

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—An American arrested for alleged possession of illegal drugs and now jailed in Kalibo, Aklan accused policemen of planting evidence against him.

Barry Victor Lanier, 58, and his wife Perlita were charged with violation of Republic Act 9165 or Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 before the Regional Trial Court in the capital town of Kalibo.

The couple is now detained at the district jail of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Kalibo.

Lanier, a retired economist of the Asian Development Bank, said the drugs were planted by members of a police raiding team.

"My wife and I have never been involved in illegal drugs," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview from jail.

From Long Beach, California, he has lived with his wife in Boracay since 1994 after he retired.

A team of the Task Force Roulette of the Aklan provincial police office, Philippine Drug Enforcement Administration and the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU) raided the couple's residence in Balabag Village on the island resort at about 4 a.m. on Dec. 17.

The raiding team seized 1.7 kg of dried marijuana leaves and 10.4 grams of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride), according to a report of the BSPU.

The raid was based on a search warrant issued by Judge Marietta Homena-Valencia, executive judge of the Aklan Regional Trial Court.

Lanier denied owning the drugs found beside their bed. "The stuff was brought by someone but we don't know who," he said, adding that the drugs "could have been planted by anybody."

He said members of the raiding team did not identify themselves as policemen and did not advise them of their constitutional rights.

"They were dressed Rambo-style with knapsacks and two even pointed their guns at my wife's head," he said.

Lanier said he and his wife "strongly suspect" that a long-running feud between them and Manoc-Manoc Village chief Joel Gelito could have prompted the raid.

He said his wife has filed several complaints against Gelito since October 2002 for "illegally" constructing a building in front of the couple's residence.

Lanier said Gelito built a three-story building, which violated a permit that allowed only a two-story structure.

"That's impossible. Our case has nothing to do with his arrest," Gelito said when asked for comment.

Senior Supt. Nemesio Neron, Aklan police chief, said Lanier had no other defense but to claim the drugs were planted.

"The raid was in order," he said.

He said the raid had no connection with the feud. "They (couple) have been in our drug watch list."

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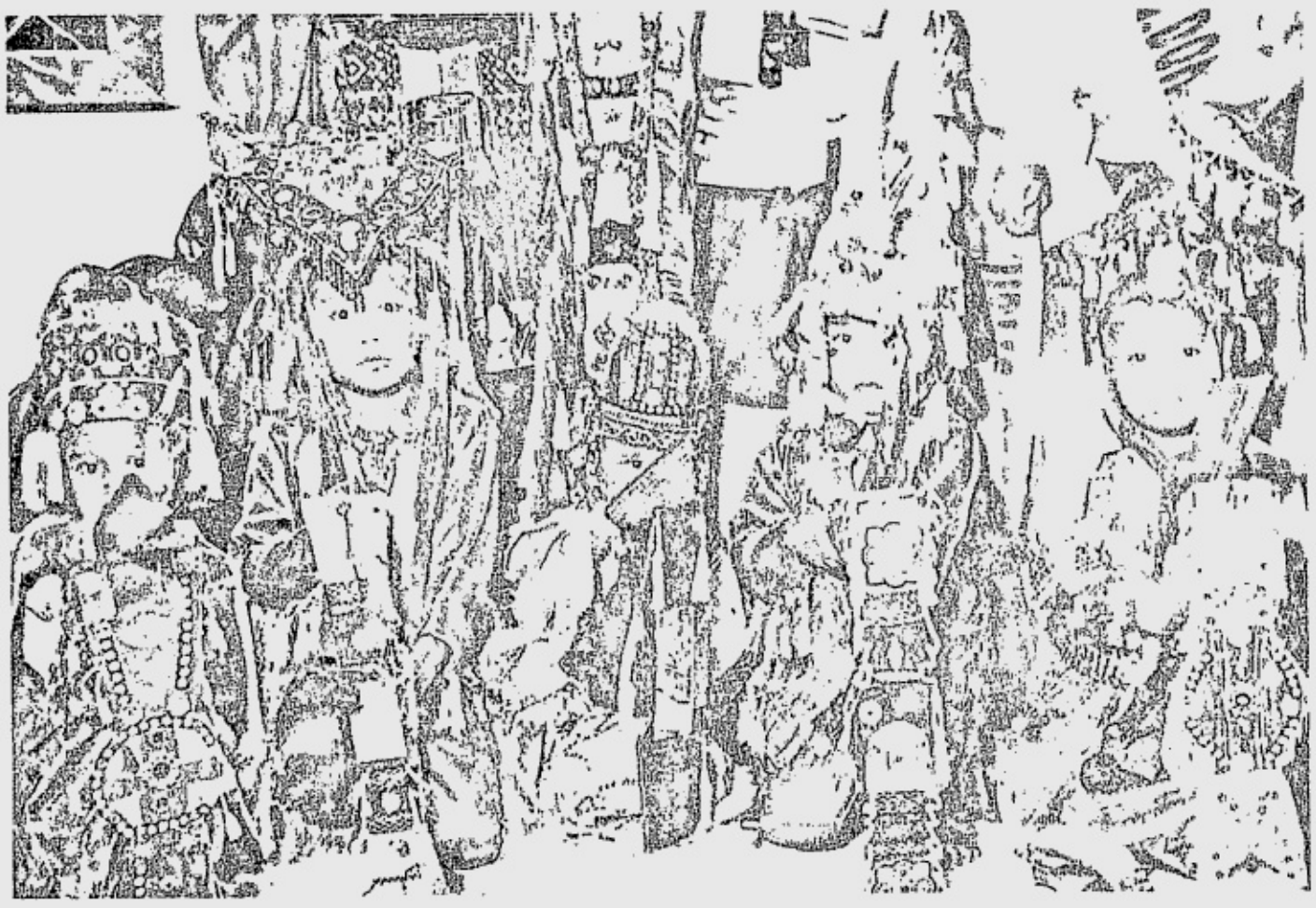

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On Nov. 19, government worker Calbayog filed a plunder case against Tuazon for allegedly accumulating P90 million in unexplained wealth and lying in his Statement of Assets and Liabilities (SAL).

Tuazon denied the allegations, saying they were politically motivated.

"That is pure political harassment [illegible] decision is not yet final (because) I filed [illegible] a motion for reconsideration [illegible]" he told the Inquirer.

Federico Catalino, Samar election supervisor, said he would give Tuazon five days to answer the petition then send it to the main Comelec office in Manila.

The case stemmed from allegations that the road project was highly overpriced and some PEA officials made money out of the deal.

Tuazon resigned from the PEA on Oct. 30, 2002, more than two months before Malacañang issued the decision.

He said Uy should be disqualified, too, based on a conviction on a nepotism case.

American says cops planted evidence on drug charges

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—An American arrested for alleged possession of illegal drugs and now jailed in Kalibo, Aklan accused policemen of planting evidence against him.

Barry Victor Lanier, 58, and his wife Perlita were charged with violation of Republic Act 9165 or Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 before the Regional Trial Court in the capital town of Kalibo.

The couple is now detained at the district jail of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Kalibo.

Lanier, a retired economist of the Asian Development Bank, said the drugs were planted by members of a police raiding team.

"My wife and I have never been involved in illegal drugs," he told the Inquirer in a telephone interview from jail.

From Long Beach, California, he has lived with his wife in Boracay since 1994 after he retired.

A team of the Task Force Roulette of the Aklan provincial police office, Philippine Drug Enforcement Administration and the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU) raided the couple's residence in Balabag Village on the island resort at about 4 a.m. on Dec. 17.

The raiding team seized 1.7 kg of dried marijuana leaves and 10.4 grams of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride), according to a report of the BSPU.

The raid was based on a search warrant issued by Judge Marietta Homena-Valencia, executive judge of the Aklan Regional Trial Court.

Lanier denied owning the drugs found beside their bed. "The stuff was brought by someone but we don't know who," he said, adding that the drugs "could have been planted by anybody."

He said members of the raiding team did not identify themselves as policemen and did not advise them of their constitutional rights.

"They were dressed Rambo-style with knapsacks and two even pointed their guns at my wife's head," he said.

Lanier said he and his wife "strongly suspect" that a long-running feud between them and Manoc-Manoc Village chief Joel Gelito could have prompted the raid.

He said his wife has filed several complaints against Gelito since October 2002 for "illegally" constructing a building in front of the couple's residence.

Lanier said Gelito built a three-story building, which violated a permit that allowed only a two-story structure.

"That's impossible. Our case has nothing to do with his arrest," Gelito said when asked for comment.

Senior Supt. Nemesio Neron, Aklan police chief, said Lanier had no other defense but to claim the drugs were planted.

"The raid was in order," he said.

He said the raid had no connection with the feud. "They (couple) have been in our drug watch list."

INQUIRER Visayas

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Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Visayas yearender: Aches, joys, kindness

By The PDI Visayas Bureau

THE YEAR 2003 ended for the Visayas in a very heart wrenching way: landslides in the three towns of Southern Leyte on Panaon Island left 154 people dead and 1,000 families homeless.

Many survivors are still in evacuation centers.

Many blamed the tragedy on environment destruction brought by decades of abuse of the earth. We saw what it did to Ormoc City in Leyte on Nov. 5, 1991 when flashfloods and mudslides claimed over 5,000 lives. We never learned our lessons, it seemed.

Yet, amid this tragedy we saw how Southern Leytenos tried to rise from adversity.

On New Year's Day, the provincial government launched the "Bag-ong Panaon" project in the hope of rebuilding destroyed homes and lives.

Damaged spirits are harder to rebuild and within days after the landslides, at least eight psychiatrists and trauma experts lived among the survivors to help them get through their ordeal.

Some good has emerged from the many tribulations that beset the country in the past year.

Amid the economic and political uncertainties brought on by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) scare, the mutiny in July and the attempt to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide, there were also times when goodwill shone through.

Children get help

We witnessed the generosity of people who made it possible for conjoined 19-month-old twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre from Silay City in Negros Occidental to be brought to the Children's Hospital at Montefoire (CHAM) in New York for a series of surgeries to separate them.

They are the children of Arlene Aguirre, a nurse and single parent, from Silay City, Negros Occidental.

Surgeons of the CHAM successfully completed the second stage in a series of operations to separate Carl and Clarence.

The twins returned to Blythedale Children's Hospital in New York for continuing physical and nutritional therapy. Depending on how well the brothers respond, they could have another operation before the end of the month.

We marveled at INQUIRER readers who came to the rescue of severely malnourished Micah Urbanoso, 8, of Bacolod City.

Micah, born with primate-like features, was skin-and-bones, and weighed only 7.4 kilos when admitted at the Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital in Bacolod City. She measured barely 3 feet tall and because of dehydration caused by diarrhea, could not stand.

Micah looks like a primate because of microcephaly—her head is smaller than the usual.

When she returned home in Kabankalan in early December she could already smile and sit up.

We were in awe at two policemen of Quinapondan, Eastern Samar who stood in the way of rebels who raided their police station on June 22.

Men and women of honor

Barely a week later, we were horrified at the death of 17 soldiers and militiamen who were slaughtered when some 200 New People's Army guerrillas overrun and burned a 52nd Infantry Battalion detachment in the remote village of Cagpile in Oras, Samar on June 26.

One tale stood out from this tragedy: A civilian was killed in the Oras raid—the young wife of a soldier, 19-year-old Mary Jane Canonigo, who, after seeing her husband felled by bullets, put down her three-month-old son in the foxhole, grabbed her husband's M-16 rifle and fired at the attackers until she, too, had fallen, just a few distance away from her husband. She died on the way to the Oras district hospital. Her baby was unscathed.

Passages

The past year also saw the passing of Bacolod Bishop Emeritus Antonio Y. Fortich who even in death drew national and international news coverage and the attention of Pope John Paul II and the highest-ranking officials of the country.

Fortich, bishop of the poor and man of peace and outspoken advocate of human rights even in the most trying times of martial law, died peacefully at the Riverside Medical Center in Bacolod City at 8:15 a.m. July 2, 2003. He was 89.

On Oct. 29, former Sen. Rodolfo Ganzon, one of the most illustrious political leaders of Iloilo, died but his distinguished political record was overshadowed by the long-running feud between his children from his deceased first wife Dolores and his second wife Rona.

Jose Pidal

In August, accusations of Sen. Panfilo Lacson against First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo involved Ilonggos after presidential brother-in-law Ignacio Arroyo admitted that he was the mysterious Jose Pidal whose family traces its roots to Iloilo.

Glimmers of hope

Again, there were glimmers of hope despite the controversies, scandals and problems.

Residents of Boracay succeeded in blocking a casino on the island-resort.

In March, the airport of Antique reopened after nearly 20 years.

Antiqueños seeking closure to the murder of former Gov. Evelio Javier drew nearer to their quest for justice after marathon hearings were held. The trial is expected to be completed this year, 18 years after Javier's death.

Ilonggos took pride in multi-awarded teacher Josette Biyo who continues to reap recognition after becoming the first Asian teacher to win the Intel Excellence in Teaching Award in the United States last year where a minor planet was named after her.

At the close of the year, Cuban-American pastor Danny Garcia walked for nearly 134 kilometers in Iloilo to help raise funds for the pediatric ward of the Western Visayas Medical Center.

From the reports of Jani Arnaiz, Cyrain Cabueñas, Carla P. Gomez and Nestor Burgos Jr.

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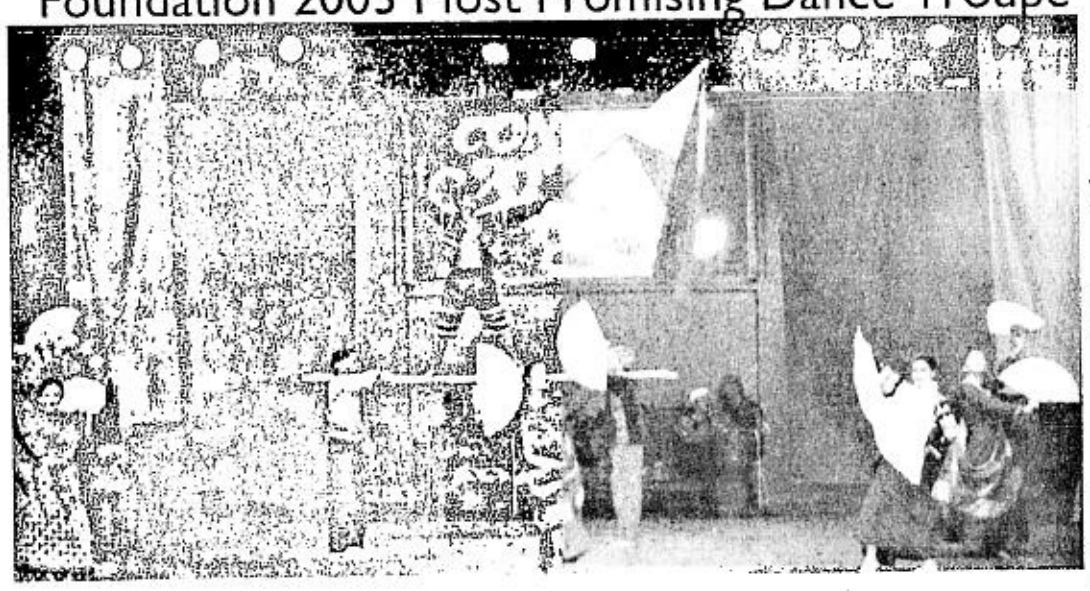

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Contempt

EDITORIAL

THE MEMBERS of the Special Division that gave the green light for Joseph Estrada to go to the United States for medical treatment better revisit their decision quickly before the Sandiganbayan loses its dignity and credibility completely. The disgraced former president with the arthritic knees apparently has been pulling their leg, and succeeding famously.

Almost from the day he was detained on charges of plunder, Estrada had pleaded that he be allowed to fly to the United States to have his knees operated on by his American doctor. After rejecting his petition in June last year, on the grounds that the operation could be done in the Philippines by Filipino surgeons, the Sandiganbayan relented two days before Christmas and told Estrada he could leave finally. Now no one is certain whether he is going or staying—Estrada included.

At first, Estrada's aides said the court's decision could be a ploy to get him out of the way before the May presidential elections and maybe even for keeps. More recently, his camp gave three different reasons why he might opt to stay.

Rufus Rodriguez, spokesman of Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino, said the former president was having second thoughts about leaving as the presidential campaign was about to begin. Estrada wanted to help unite the opposition and help his friend, Fernando Poe Jr., win the presidency, Rodriguez said. "He does not want to abandon his best friend at this stage of the political game when FPJ needs his help the most."

Everyone in his camp seemed to have forgotten that a few days earlier Estrada declared that Poe would win "with or without me." But then he said it in a moment of pique, after Poe left Estrada's son Jinggoy out of his senatorial ticket, and now the former San Juan mayor, who is also facing plunder charges like his father, is safely on board.

Estrada's wife, Sen. Luisa Ejercito, had a different reason for her husband's non-departure. A US Embassy officer told her Estrada would not get a US visa, she said. "They don't want a domestic problem to be brought there." It's a claim that cannot be verified since the US Embassy refuses to comment, but Malacañang which seems eager to see Estrada go should find little trouble facilitating the issuance of a visa.

Estrada himself said he may have to forego an operation in the United States since he could not afford the fees being quoted by his doctor, Christopher Mow of the Stanford Medical Center. Mow was demanding $1.25 million for "surgical procedures," not including professional fees, he said.

That is one more incredible tale coming from Estrada who is accused of amassing some P4.1 billion illegally. One who could give two senators P1 million each in *balato* after a productive mahjong session cannot be so destitute that he cannot produce that kind of money for a needed operation.

Now the latest word from Estrada is that he is going after all. If he could only endure the pain, Estrada said Thursday, he would not leave. "But I can no longer bear it," he said.

Such *urong-sulong* is no longer unexpected from Estrada who has shown nothing but contempt for the country's judicial processes and institutions. The Sandiganbayan ought to tell him his antics are not funny. They make the anti-graft court look ridiculously naive and gullible.

If Estrada's physical condition follows the rise and fall of his political fortune, then he doesn't need a US operation. In fact, several Filipino orthopedic surgeons have come out to question the findings of his doctor. They have pointed out that if he is threatened by paralysis caused by spine problems, then replacing his knees would not save him. They have also assured that all these procedures can be done here without endangering the life of Estrada. Strange that the Sandiganbayan didn't see any need to seek a second opinion.

Unless Estrada decides to fly over the weekend, there is still time for the Sandiganbayan to undo the mistake. By his indecision, Estrada has demonstrated that there is no urgency in having that operation. Besides he has not complied with one of the conditions set for his flighting, which is to recognize the authority of the Court to try his case. All he has done was sign an "undertaking" saying that he was "submitting" to its authority. At the same time, Estrada, who has refused to call present evidence in his own defense before the court, has announced that he would soon release a documentary rebutting the charges against him and bring his evidence before the people.

Can the court honestly expect someone with so little respect for it to keep his pledge to return for the resumption of a trial he considers a farce?

Meager choices

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

THE COMING elections will have to be the most ludicrous ever in our political history since our people first exercised the right to vote in 1907 when they elected the Philippine Assembly.

In previous elections, we had reputable and respectable candidates who were in most cases importuned by their followers to run for public office. Many did so only reluctantly in response to the call of duty. They did not present themselves, much less vie or buy for their nomination. They were not as presumptuous as many of our present crop of office-seekers.

In our first presidential election in 1935, the candidates were Manuel L. Quezon, Emilio Aguinaldo and Gregorio Aglipay. Quezon won, and again in 1940 over Juan Sumulong. After the Japanese Occupation, Sergio Osmeña Sr. lost to Manuel A. Roxas, who died in 1948. He was succeeded by Elpidio Quirino, who defeated Jose P. Laurel and Jose Avelino in 1949 but lost to Ramon Magsaysay in 1953. Magsaysay also died in office and was replaced by Carlos P. Garcia, who won his own term in 1957 over Jose Yulo, Claro M. Recto and Manuel Manahan. Macapagal beat Garcia in 1961 but in 1965 lost to Ferdinand Marcos, who won a second term in 1969 against Sergio Osmeña, Jr. Marcos imposed martial law in 1972 but was defeated by Corazon C. Aquino in the "snap election" of 1986 whose falsification triggered Edsa I and his downfall.

During all those years, the two-party system was in effect and the contests were basically between the leaders of the administration and the opposition. These candidates were highly regarded by the electorate which confined its choices to them and generally ignored the "also rans" who only muddled the issues between the major contending parties.

So how is it with our current presidential candidates?

Not one of them compares with the presidential aspirants of the more decorous past. GMA vowed she would not run but changed her mind and started campaigning even before the permitted period. FPJ is an intellectual lightweight with no political experience but plenty of mass appeal. Lacson was one of the enforcers of the Marcos tyranny and is facing prosecution for several serious offenses allegedly committed when he was PNP chief. Roco is the best of the lot but has no political base or party to speak of. Then there is the evangelist who naively believes his supposed 7 million disciples will support him.

In the vice presidential race, Noli de Castro is expected to checkmate fellow newscaster Loren Legarda, who is contemptuously dismissed as a political opportunist. Roco's running mate is an obscure "Who, he?" to many people. Nobody seems to want to join Lacson and Brother Eddie as their partner.

The multi-party system established in lieu of the two-party system has caused much confusion in our elections. There is no single party at present that can be considered dominant, which is the reason why the members in the various coalitions cannot be held individually responsible for their platforms and performance. Their common candidates do not necessarily share the same objectives. Their affiliation is dictated by personal convenience or ambition; and they have no institutional loyalty to the modus vivendi they use only for political ends.

This is evident from the facility with which candidates transfer from one party to another without the slightest deference to principles or partisan commitments. Thus, Legarda, who opposed Estrada during the impeachment trial, is now with the party of Enrile and Tatad, who defended him, while John Osmeña, their ally, is now with the party that prosecuted and finally ousted their common chief. Santiago left the KNP because she cannot abide Legarda. Rodolfo Biazon defected earlier to Roco's party but is back to Lakas as one of its senatorial candidates. Carlos Padilla is on the Senate slates of Poe and Lacson but reportedly says he will continue to support Lacson and not Poe. On the other hand, Lakas spokesman Heherson Alvarez has been elbowed out by Orlando Mercado, Erap's defense secretary, and Ernesto Herrera, a Lakas vice president, has joined the LDP for being excluded from his own party's ticket.

Among the incoming members of the Senate are Bong "Captain Barbell" Revilla, Lito Lapid if he campaigns on his horse, Robert Jaworski carrying his "propesterous" basketball, Jinggoy Estrada and Manong Ernesto Maceda who sneaked into the KNP ticket when two originals bolted, as well as martial law stalwarts Enrile, Tatad and Imee Marcos, to further uglify the already tattered image of what used to be called the Upper House. Diokno, Tañada, Osias and their other honorable colleagues must be shuddering in disgust.

Where is the leader who can redeem the nation, as when Quezon faced up to the American colonizer, Laurel protected us from the Japanese invader, Recto invoked the spirit of nationalism against the encroaching aliens, Magsaysay recognized the wisdom and power of the common masses, and Ninoy Aquino chose to die defiant rather than live on bended knees?

Sadly, he is not among the candidates in this year's elections.

Back to writing

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

FIRST the Comelec misled legitimate registered voters into "validating" their registrations—in effect, going through a second registration process—by threatening that those who did not do so would not be recognized as a voter. This Voters Validation System project, by the way, which was not only totally unnecessary but also resulted in a much reduced registration period for new voters, cost the taxpayer P1 billion.

Now the Comelec may be trying, if unofficial reports are correct, to pressure the Supreme Court into either: (1) postponing its decision on the automated counting machine case brought up by Gus Lagman and other IT professionals—until it becomes "moot and academic"—or (2) actually deciding in Comelec's favor, i.e., giving the imprimatur to an anomalous, void contract, and allowing the use of a counting and canvassing system that is vulnerable to high-tech cheating.

What threat is the Comelec using on the Court? A "constitutional crisis": doing a manual system would "push the elections back by two months," which means not only that elections would have to be held after the second Monday in May as provided by the Constitution, but also that the presidential proclamation would have to also be postponed, and since the term of office of elected officials ends on June 30, there will be no one around to do the proclaiming, etc., etc.

A dangerous scenario indeed. But it all hinges on the Comelec's assertion as to the time line for a manual system. The Comelec calculates that the preparation will take 180 days (which involves obtaining the dandy roll for watermarking the ballot paper, milling, printing, packing and distribution, plus a contingency allowance of 15 days). But others who are familiar with the process say that everything can de done in as little as 115 days (inclusive of a 15 day contingency period), so that if the preparation were to start on Jan. 15, the elections can still be held on May 10. But that requires precise planning and execution, and considering the Comelec's track record last year (the three projects it undertook—voters validation, registration of new voters and registration of OFWs—were dismal failures), that may be too much to ask.

A 135-day turnaround time (also including 15 days contingency allowance), however, appears feasible, so long as the Comelec does not deliberately drag its feet and it works closely with the political parties and Namfrel. This time line would require elections to be postponed for three weeks (May 31), which would still allow the proclamation of elected officials before June 30.

But what about the constitutional provision setting the elections on the second Monday of May? That is not a problem. The relevant provision starts with "Unless otherwise provided by law...," and Section 5 of the Omnibus Election Code does provide for postponement of election, which in fact the Comelec has previously done.

Thus, it is to be hoped that the Supreme Court will not succumb to any Comelec blackmail. And that it does not dither about it, either (already, the decision has been too long in coming).

At this point, one may well ask: How come Gus Lagman and his colleagues, who have been espousing the automation of elections, or for that matter, yours truly, who have been excoriating the Comelec for dragging its feet on automation (which should have been in place since 2001), how come we now prefer the manual system for 2004? How come I am now excoriating the Comelec for pressing for automation?

That's a fair question. And the answer is quite straightforward: because a manual system, with all its drawbacks, is at this point the lesser evil, compared to the Comelec's choice. And that would still be true even if we ignored the anomalies surrounding the Comelec's bidding and awarding process.

Why? Firstly, because the automation process, which was designed to minimize interventions, has, in its implementation Comelec-style, opened other and more sophisticated windows for intervention—in the counting, canvassing and transmission. There will be opportunities for *dagdag-bawas* that will make the *dagdag-bawas* in a manual system look like child's play. How could this happen? Because the Comelec does not seem to know what "stand alone" means—which is a requirement of the election automation law.

And secondly, because the Comelec dragged its feet on certain phases of the project (although it was in such a hurry to name the winning bidder that it did so even without the proper documentation). For example, it took two months for the en banc to act on the request for funds and authority to proceed, and even then doled out minuscule amounts compared to what was needed for such critical activities as ACM (Automatic Counting Machines) Testing and Acceptance, ACM operators' training, Logistics, Public Information and Education, and the like.

The upshot: the software for the canvassing process will not be ready until February (so when are they going to test it?) and the public information campaign hasn't even begun. The latter assumes even more importance than usual because the filling out of the ballots requires shading—and the problem that hasn't yet been solved is that shading too lightly or too darkly may result in the machine treating a ballot as invalid. Sen. Vicente Sotto's apprehensions have a real basis, whether the voter is rich or poor.

As the saying goes, better a devil we know than a devil we don't know. And by the way, the proposal to have partial manual and partial automation just compounds the problem, for then the Comelec will have to work with two systems, when it cannot even get one right.

Confused

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

NOW that Miriam Santiago has joined the K-4 coalition party of the administration as a senatorial candidate, she should have the *delicadeza* to stop expressing her loyalty to former President Estrada. The INQUIRER quoted her as saying she was leaving "only the coalition" of Fernando Poe Jr., not the opposition, and she was not forsaking Estrada, whom she continues to address as "President," assuring him that the "personal-political relationship" between them remained unchanged.

What kind of crap is that? By joining K-4, she has forsaken the opposition. This statement shows that the feisty woman is confused. It's easy to predict that she would be a pain in the neck of the administration if elected to the Senate, although that chamber would become colorful again.

* * *

The House of Representatives has hurled a direct challenge to the Senate majority, led by Senate President Franklin Drilon, to back up its old stand supporting Charter change through a constitutional convention. It will be recalled that 14 senators passed a resolution calling for a convention, which effectively derailed the House's own resolution, overwhelmingly passed, seeking to convene a constituent assembly. Now a multi-party House majority, led by Speaker Jose de Venecia, has turned around and supports a convention, and has called for the election of 215 delegates to be held simultaneous with the May 2004 national elections. This position is said to have the blessings of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who perceives the shift to the parliamentary-federal system as the needed impetus for the Philippines to catch up with its neighbors.

Drilon, however, is perceived to be throwing a damper again, saying that with only 15 session days left before Congress adjourns for the elections, and so many bills to be tackled, including the 2004 budget, there isn't enough time to tackle a joint resolution for a convention. He also recommended that Charter change be tackled by the new Congress, but that would mean a separate election for delegates. The Senate is scheduled to hold a caucus on this issue on Monday when Congress reopens. Both chambers have held marathon sessions before on many issues, so why not on the convention resolution?

* * *

Former Sen. Ernesto Maceda, who's on FPJ's senatorial team, has advised Sen. Panfilo Lacson of the rival opposition LDP faction to withdraw from the presidential race, if the surveys show he has not climbed up from the cellar. Lacson, said Maceda, should give up for the sake of opposition unity, but the senator has ridiculed that challenge. Actually, the talk is that Lacson is hanging around just in case FPJ is disqualified from running because of his reported American citizenship. In that event, Lacson could just step in and lead a unified opposition.

* * *

Tis the season for confusion indeed, much of it deliberate, and this should put people on guard against being used for political purposes. There's a lot of black propaganda going around, as well as disinformation. To illustrate, retired Police Brig. Gen. Juanito Aquino called up to deny that he and retired Brig. Gen. Ismael Musico had signed a resolution that appeared in yesterday's INQUIRER. The ad purported to show that a large number of signatories were advocating the formation of a "new government free of traditional-elite politics" and calling for "No elections (Noel) 2004." Aquias later sent this column a signed statement stating their denial.

* * *

The Supreme Court has to step in once again to restore law and order in the historic municipality of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, where the Comelec seems bent on thwarting the Court's will. If the SC fails to rule on the mayoralty case there, violence could break out. Last Jan. 3, when nobody was looking, the Comelec suddenly proclaimed Nestor Magno as the winner of the 2001 elections even though Mayor Sonia Ramoso-Lorenzo was proclaimed by the Board of Canvassers in the May 2001 elections, after Magno was disqualified by the Comelec on account of a previous conviction on four counts of bribery. Magno appealed to the SC and asked that Lorenzo's proclamation be annulled. The Court subsequently ruled that while Magno's disqualification was good only for two years, it could not annul Lorenzo's proclamation since the proper remedy should have been a "timely election protest" which Magno failed to file.

* * *

The SC decision became final and executory and Lorenzo is nearing completion of her second multi-awarded term, but Magno hasn't stopped working on the Comelec. Last Jan. 3, the Comelec hastily ordered him proclaimed mayor after a new Board of Canvassers found him "winning" by 3,000 votes, even though the poll body did not annul Lorenzo's proclamation. *Bakit ang lakas ni Magno sa Comelec?*

Lorenzo has asked the Comelec to reconsider its resolution, arguing that the SC has upheld her proclamation as valid, but instead of acting on her motion, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos ordered Magno proclaimed, thus putting two mayors in San Isidro.

The potential for violence and chaos there has prompted Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson to call on Magno and the Comelec to respect the conditions set by the SC. "If I let you and the Comelec execute this kind of irregular proceedings without due process, this will start a precedent that will allow any mayor in Nueva Ecija to be unseated arbitrarily or at whim. I cannot allow that to happen in my province," stressed Joson.

The SC ought to step in to prevent a mockery of its decision.

Jona

YOUNG BLOOD

Gerlie M. Uy

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

SHE is 15, brown-skinned and fairly tall for her age. She talks in a loud voice and flirts openly. You may think she is just another ordinary girl, growing up in a barrio. But she is a no ordinary girl because in order to live an ordinary life, she has to be a survivor first.

When she was 8, Jona was sexually abused repeatedly by her grandfather and two uncles. Her older sister who was a year older was also abused by them.

Jona and her sister lived with their grandparents, after they were abandoned by their parents. The older girl appears to have coped quite well after her traumatic experience, but not Jona.

For Jona to lead an ordinary life is next to impossible. Given the resources and expertise available in their hometown, the social workers who know her can only feel sorry for Jona.

Not too long ago, the private institution that welcomed her gave up on her. The parents of the other wards petitioned for her ejection for being a bad influence. She was talking a lot about sex and teaching their children to masturbate. And she was reported to have molested a male ward.

From the time she was placed under the custody of social workers, she has undergone counseling, she was temporarily housed in a crisis center and then brought to the private institution. She was given medication and psychiatric treatment in a government hospital.

After all that, she still exhibited outlandish behavior, such as taking long walks alone without purpose and showing up in the house of a social worker for no reason at all. In her barrio, she flirts a lot. She has had sex with curious teenagers. She hates herself after doing it but admits that she solicits sex.

Soon after Jona was taken into their home by a kind couple, her foster mother returned her to the social workers when she became "too close" to her husband and sought the "attention" of other boys.

What will happen to her when she reaches the legal age? Government social workers are sorry for her. Because of the very limited government resources, Jona must learn to take care of herself while she is still a minor. When she turns 18, she will have to fend for herself without government assistance. There are many other minors who need help, and the services available to abused women is not as extensive as when the victim is a minor.

Jona's case seems to be impossible because she lives in a society where sexual norms are too conservative and sex cannot be discussed openly even with a near kin. It seems impossible because sexual therapy is out of the reach of common folk like her. It seems impossible because Jona by age 18 will cease to be a ward of the state, with no education and no family to support her.

Jona is 15 going on 16, and she seems to have no chance of breaking away from her past. What will happen to her? She only wants to live an ordinary life. Will someone please help turn her into a survivor?

Gerlie M. Uy, 25, took the recent bar exams and is enjoying her vacation by reading books, composing poems and essays and looking for a job or a scholarship abroad.

Encouraging signs in world affairs

NEWS ANALYSIS

Carol Giacomo

WASHINGTON—After a violent and difficult 2003, the new year has brought some encouraging signs in international affairs but optimism is tempered by the apparent revival of al-Qaida and instability in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Revived India-Pakistan talks, Libya's vow to abandon nuclear weapons, hints North Korea may be willing to again freeze its nuclear program and incipient Iran-Egypt and Syria-Turkey rapprochement are widely seen in Washington as positive developments.

Even the United States has reached out—albeit in the most limited way—to bitter foe Iran following a devastating earthquake that killed thousands of ordinary people.

But problems persist, including the apparent revival of al-Qaida; instability in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan; and continued division in Tehran and Washington about whether and when the two long-time adversaries might actually try to seriously mend fences.

"We saw a lot of things happen over the last few months. We've seen progress in the global war against terror. We've seen greater cooperation between the nations of the world. But the challenge ahead of us is a difficult one and a long one," US Secretary of State Colin Powell told a news conference.

President George W. Bush's administration hoped Saddam Hussein's ouster in Iraq and an assertive US foreign policy would advance America's interest, making the world safer. There have been tantalizing international shifts in recent weeks but just how much credit or blame should accrue to Bush is a matter of debate.

"It's always hard to disentangle what is a cause and what is an effect. Some things are related to or influenced by Iraq and and some not at all," said James Steinberg, deputy national security adviser under former President Bill Clinton.

Observed Kenneth Katzman, a Middle East expert with the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service: "If we point to Iraq and say Iraq had a repercussion effect, we've had some positive things going on—but also negative things."

This is a US election year and Bush's ability to win a second term will turn in large part on foreign policy.

Libya's vow to abandon its weapons of mass destruction program followed secret talks with Britain and the United States. The decision has been hailed as proof that a radical state can be persuaded there is more to gain in today's world by following international norms. Experts say it may also help prove the value of negotiations to Iran and North Korea.

Many give Bush credit for the Libyan success. But Steinberg said that while the Iraq war and recent seizure of a nuclear-related shipment bound for Tripoli had a role in the timing of Libya's decision, leader Muammar Gaddafi probably realized in the late 1990s that he eventually would have to scuttle the arms program to get out from under US sanctions and revive the economy.

This week's India-Pakistan decision to start formal talks next month, including on the disputed territory of Kashmir, is another breakthrough. The nuclear rivals nearly went to war as recently as two years ago.

The US has made great strides in improving ties with India and with Pakistan and has consistently encouraged both sides to talk to each other.

While Iraq war pressures "did not hurt," Steinberg said the progress in South Asia was not a consequence of the Iraq war or of a US broker role. Rather, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, target of two recent assassination attempts, realized his attempts to manipulate militants fighting India in Kashmir was failing and costing him too much politically, he said.

Although Pyongyang's offer on Tuesday to suspend its nuclear program was described as encouraging, US officials are not convinced the North will really abandon its weapons ambitions.

US officials and experts generally saw value in recent rapprochements by Syria with Turkey, and Egypt with Iran—even though two US allies, Turkey and Egypt, are drawing closer to two US adversaries, Iran and Syria.

"Syria's desire to reach out to Turkey is part of (President Bashir) Assad's feeling of vulnerability (after the stunning US victory in Iraq) and Turkey's moderating influence on Syria could help" the regional security situation, said one analyst who spoke anonymously.

But Katzman said of the Syria-Turkey overtures: "I don't know what to make of it. It's so tenuous."

US officials and experts noted that most Arab and European countries have been improving ties with Iran, so Egypt is in line with this trend. What is important is whether Egypt can persuade Iran to surrender al-Qaida suspects and make other policy changes Washington has been seeking, they said.

Bush took advantage of the recent Iranian earthquake to provide humanitarian aid to a country Bush calls part of an "axis of evil." This created a new opening for possible dialogue between two governments estranged since the the 1979 Iranian revolution, but no immediate breakthrough is expected. ***Reuters***

Manila by night

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THE TITLE is misleading. We really didn't do a nightclub/bar tour. What we did on one of those evenings after Dec. 25th when traffic was non-existent (the majority having walked, ridden, sailed or flown to various destinations here and abroad, making you pray they'd do it more often) was to see what there was to see.

First stop was the amateurish Light & Sound Show in Intramuros ("look to the left, look to the right" type of instructions by guide). Also known as the Museum of Horrors by some due to its slanted context, one would have expected a more technically polished production with its cost of hundreds of millions. Then, of course, there's the campaign propaganda aspect: Dick Gordon leading the *inaping Pinoy* to freedom. Until we get out of the mindset of needing someone to "save" this "victim" nation, we're not getting anywhere.

After an hour of this, we inspected Bing Cruz's new concessions. Now this last should no doubt amuse you some more. Cruz, as some of you will remember, was the Estrada supporter who was given the lease to "develop" Baluarte de San Andres and then proceeded to re-let the areas to different restaurant concessionaires and one disco. All of these ended up as fiascoes, with a major need for restoration since holes were punched into the walls for air-conditioning units and mezzanine floors. The rules and regulations of the Intramuros Administration were thrashed, but was anyone answerable, including Cruz? Hardly.

The bulwark is still unusable with a "*tambakan*" of garbage and construction material. No one is restoring anything, but Cruz gets more concessions. That's the way it goes around here, so we better get used to it. No one is accountable and neither will government explain, which is why democracy, as we know it, is a farce.

Cruz's new concession used to be an open space where bands played and people could sit around. It has now been developed (if that's the word for it) into a beer-garden/fish-ball, cheapy-type of area. Low maintenance since it's dirty and no money out on his part. You've got another eyesore but what else is new? Give us something to be proud of, and we'll soon convert it into garbage. Oh, it now also stinks of horse manure and urine. Surely Santamaria who handles those *calesas* and carriages can do something about that.

From there we made it to Rose's Ilustrado, since Bai de los Reyes was full-up with Ting de los Reyes of the Department of Tourism entertaining foreign guests, according to the maitre d'. Lovely post-Christmas dinner of innards and fried rice, high in uric acid and cholesterol (does your soul if not your heart good).

From there, we decided to take a look at Avenida Rizal, which probably was not the most intelligent thing to do at 9 in the evening, but it certainly was the best time since there was no traffic and we parked with no fuss in front of Sta. Cruz Church where people were dancing *ocho-ocho* in the courtyard. From there, we walked through Bustos (I'm not sure if they haven't changed its name) which was dark and dreary, with people sleeping on the sidewalk and blinking signs advertising scantily dressed dancers. *Okay lang*, you can chuck it up to ambiance. I did find out though that Raon is now renamed Puyat. (Are we running out of politicians? Buendia, after all, has been rechristened Puyat already.)

But Avenida was a pleasant surprise. Of course, I don't know what it's like in the day time, but it's a brightly lit promenade at night and that's exactly what people were doing. It underscored the need for open spaces and breathing room for city dwellers. Some of the buildings have been repainted, including one belonging to Arguelles. There's new construction planned, although it's a pity that it looks like a parking structure and does not follow the lines of the 1930s building beside it. One of these days we should try a daytime tour and hope that the goods are as interesting as the ones in the Juan Luna/Divisoria/Quiapo malls.

By this time, having walked the length of Avenida, we were tired but there was still the Boardwalk, another of those fiascoes government is so prone to investing taxpayer's money in. Turns out the Philippine Tourism Authority decided to salvage (in the old meaning of the word) whatever they could of Lito Banayo's brainchild. Unfortunately, it's not strictly a boardwalk since: (1) it's not wood and the uneven cement foundation with posts sticking out and unfilled holes makes it unsafe to walk on; (2) there's no sanitation visible and concessionaires are cooking right there, making one ask if there is a sanitation department in City Hall; and (3) the goods for sale are really pathetic. Surely there are better and newer handicrafts in Baclaran. *Nakakahiya.*

So there were a lot of things to do and see in Manila this Christmas season. We missed the Lantern Festival that a friend recommended, but there were other attractions. Since a lot of these are government-sponsored perhaps the DTI should be part of a committee to recommend goods to sell or, I understand, there's an association of vendors that can be tapped. One has only to see the crowds at the Food Terminal Inc. or at Virra Mall to realize that there is a market, but surely better quality stuff can be chosen.

The problem with being poor in this country is that the government usually assumes we don't deserve anything better than garbage and, having been programmed to think of ourselves as mendicants, we have lost the will to protest such shoddy treatment.

Purple platoon

Louis Sven

THE PHILIPPINE Air Force will give its entrance exams this month. My parents have asked—no, ordered—me to take the exams.

What makes them think I have the makings of a good military officer? Well, I was the corps commander of our high school military training program. They also say I am intelligent, I have the height and the build for a military officer. And I have always dreamed of flying.

Those are very good reasons, but there are other factors that would make joining the Armed Forces suicidal for me. First, I don't like to serve in the military: it will take away some freedoms that I cherish and turn me into a killing machine. Second, I am gay, although I do not want my parents to know it yet.

It is not that gays cannot do what good military men do. One top military official once said that gays can be good for the military, since they are good tacticians. History has many examples of gays who proved to be great soldiers and conquerors, like Alexander the Great and some of the Roman emperors.

However, most people in our society don't believe gays are capable of doing meaningful things. All they see are gays wielding hairbrushes and applying make-up.

This is unfair. I have seen gays work to develop themselves as well as others. I know gays who are good authors, educators, lawyers and doctors. And from their example, I know that homosexuality is not a hindrance to accomplishing great things. In fact, in some cases, their homosexuality has helped some professionals cope with problems more effectively.

There was a time when I really hated myself for being gay. I tried to cover it up. That is why I joined the training for cadet officers when I was in high school. I wanted to prove to myself that I wasn't gay. And I was so good during our training that I was given the highest post.

It didn't solve my problem. I was still gay. I still had the longing to love and be loved by another man.

When I was in college, I thought I could start a new life. I started courting women. But it was hopeless. My heart wasn't in it and the women I courted could sense it.

Then I met the boy who would change my outlook. He was gay, but not the loud type. He was proud to be gay and never considered it to be a hindrance to what he wanted to accomplish. He taught me to love what I was and not to hide my real self just because society would not understand me.

My mom has already told our relatives that I would be taking the Air Force exams. I don't want to disappoint them, but I don't want to go to military school and feel ashamed about myself again. And I don't want to be like those soldiers who push other people around.

I will take the exams. Maybe, I will deliberately flunk them. If not, then it's the purple platoon for me.

Louis Sven, 20, is a Mass Communications graduate of the University of the Philippines Baguio.

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Spinal surgery not total knee replacement needed?

THE SANDIGANBAYAN may have erred when it based its decision and gave full credence to the testimony of an orthopedic surgeon from Asian Hospital that former President Joseph Estrada's spinal cord was compressed and strangulated, which may result in paralysis of the lower extremities. Furthermore, the statement that Total Knee Replacement (TKR) can ease the compression of Estrada's spinal cord is unfounded and downright false.

It is common knowledge among orthopedic and spine surgeons that at age 65, Herniated Nucleous Pulposus (HNP) is rare since the intervertebral discs are dry and degenerated. Maybe, Estrada suffers from lumbar spinal stenosis due to a combination of causes including an old bulged disc and narrowing of the canal. HNP and lumbar spinal stenosis do not cause paralysis because the spinal cord ends at a higher level and only the nerve roots are involved. Spine problems and degenerative osteoarthritis of the knees are independent of each other; one does not aggravate the other, and operating on one does not correct the other.

If indeed paralysis is the issue, Estrada may need spinal surgery and not total knee replacement. Medical misinformation and irresponsible testimony of this sort should be corrected and erased from the public's mind. We maintain that these orthopedic surgical procedures can be done here safely without need for seeking treatment abroad. After all, it was the Sandiganbayan itself in its June 5, 2002 resolution that said,

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

"...that ours is a country brimming with topnotch orthopedic surgeons."

—RODOLFO L. NITOLLAMA, M.D., president, Philippine Orthopaedic Association; ALBERT U. DY Jr., M.D., president, Philippine Hip and Knee Society; and ANTONIO B. SISON, M.D., president, Philippine Spine Society, c/o POA Office: Suite 810, Future Point Plaza Condominium 112 Panay Avenue, Quezon City 1103

How can FPJ unite the nation?

SEN. Loren Legarda should stop saying that she joined Fernando Poe Jr. as his vice presidential candidate because FPJ could unite a deeply divided nation. On the contrary, FPJ has begun to deepen the cleavage because the most consequential sector of our society, the movers of the country's economic engines that drive the nation's industries, and the thinking and responsible people can only foresee an uncertain future for the country under a naive and inexperienced FPJ, who, as former Sen. Miriam D. Santiago bewails, is being stage-managed by Sen. Edgardo Angara because FPJ is "so new, so raw, and so lost." Former Rep. Mike Romero was at the height of his inanity when he insisted in an interview that anyone who earns millions of pesos like FPJ is good enough to be president. So does top comedian Dolphy who is equally popular and top grosser too, but fortunately has more brains than the former representative to admit his lack of competence to accept the most demanding and awesome job this side of the planet.

FPJ is full of contradictions and Legarda must know that by now. Contrary to what others claim, FPJ is not his own man. The few words that he has spoken in public are much less than the number of times he has adjusted his eyeglasses on his nose with his finger or raised his index-finger sign that says he's No. 1. His avowed contempt for traditional politicians and desire to stay away from them is all for show for he is now surrounded by some of the unprincipled and notorious *trapos* who had seen better times during the Marcos dictatorship and who to this day refuse to go away. Even this early, FPJ is totally dependent and surrounded by people with questionable integrity who are so anxious to use him just to get back in power. Legarda calls her political interplay as a process that will lead to national healing and unification. To the more astute observer, these are politically correct words cleverly said in order to hide a personal ambition that she has obviously pre-planned to prepare for this moment before she broke away from her party. It is pure and a simple shameful display of political prostitution driven by burning ambition to politically mate with any presidentiable Tom, Dick, or Harry.

Never have we seen so much political philandering and party switching today that nobody cares anymore if the party platform or ideals it stands for have become meaningless, and the lofty positions that some candidates aspire for are perverted and degenerated into nothing more than political jumping boards to power. Consequently, the integrity of the party suffers.

I demand a return to the two political party system to put an end to too much political opportunism and install discipline and respect in our political system.

—CESAR M. DE LOS REYES, 122-B Taurus St., Cinco Hermanos Subd., Marikina City

Hypocritical and totally oppotunistic

THE ADMINISTRATION and opposition parties are turning the 2004 elections into a sickening display of opportunism, demagoguery and blatant double-dealing.

"With the way the politicians are destroying whatever credibility there is left in the elections, the option for Nota (none of the above) when it comes to the presidential and vice presidential race becomes more attractive to us voters.

The attempts of both parties to sweep the EDSA II and Estrada plunder case issues under the rug for the sake of political expediency is appalling.

All these "reconciliation" and "healing" espoused by both the Macapagal and Poe camps are hypocritical and totally opportunist. They have forgotten the more important concepts of justice, morality and the rule of law. It is clear to us that all they are really after are the votes for 2004.

I agree with the observation that there is no more opposition, just as I believe that the administration has sold itself out on the single most important issue dividing it from the opposition, which is the Estrada plunder case. Both parties have made a mockery of the party system. The only system left is the bankrupt system of political opportunism, warlordism, demagoguery and cheating.

The slates of the Macapagal and Poe camps are the best arguments against elections as a means of social reform. *Magpapatuka na lang ako sa ahas.*

—TEDDY CASIÑO, secretary general, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, bayan@myrealbox.com

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Managing rights reports for politicial ends

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's offer of aid to the 1982-1989 so-called "purge" victims smacks of pure hypocrisy and opportunism. She declares such support with velvet hands bloodied by human rights violations her administration has perpetrated in a period of three years and as part of her campaign grandstanding for the 2004 national elections.

First, she promised victims of human rights violations under martial law justice and indemnification after the Supreme Court awarded to the government the $-658 million Escrow Account ill-gotten by the Marcoses. And yet this remains undisguised lip service to the 10,000 and more victims of this abominable part of our history when she delayed certifying the urgency of enacting into law House Bill 4535 and Senate Bill 1877. Now more than 17 years after the dictator fled and still waiting, the victims have yet to be indemnified and given justice.

Now come the documented 169,530 individual victims, 18,515 families, 71 communities and 196 households who are victims of human rights violations since she assumed power. Among them are 11 human rights workers themselves including Benjaline Hernandez of Southern Mindanao and Eden Marcellana of Southern Tagalog. Just recently, Romy Malabanan, Bayan Muna Laguna chapter secretary general and a long-time human rights worker, was murdered in his frontyard by gunmen before his horrified family two days before Christmas Day.

What about the victims of martial law and all the succeeding administrations then?

Where is the justice they so rightfully deserve? Suspected perpetrators like ex-Gen. Panfilo Lacson, ex-Col. Gringo Honasan, Col. Jovito Palparan Jr., among so many others, have remained in power. A lot more continue to commit with impunity rights violations directed against the common masses.

These human rights victims of the State were systematically and continuously imprisoned, tortured, banished, disappeared, and summarily killed in the vain attempt of the Marcos dictatorship to quell the overwhelming resistance of the people and just so globalization and other anti-people policies all the way up to now to the GMA administration could be implemented without obstacles.

Now comes the serialized story on the communist so-called "purge" and since it is almost campaign time, President Macapagal capitalizes on this and offers aid to the victims of that dreadful phase. We agree that those who were wronged all need to be given justice, but we should not remain silent and gloss over the tens of thousands more who remain to be denied justice and neglected.

President Macapagal will again surely take full advantage of this maliciously resurrected issue to discredit the national liberation movement. She will again recklessly link progressive people's organizations like the highly credible and popular Bayan Muna to the underground Left in an attempt to frustrate its chances in the coming elections and thereby deny the basic sectors a venue to be represented.

—MARIE HILAO-ENRIQUEZ, secretary general, KARAPATAN, karapatan@edsamail.com.ph

Those who left or stayed put

BEING able to visit, work or migrate to another country may be a common factor among many Filipino families.

The experience of seeing another land or place, gives anyone a wealth of mixed emotions that words cannot describe, at least the reason to say "*sana makita mo rin ang nakikita ko ngayon balang araw*," as we always hear from our loved ones.

It's been 25 or more years since the first of my closest relatives left the Philippines for another country, for the most common reason that is very evident nowadays, "for greener pastures."

One by one, I see them leave, they come and visit for a vacation from time to time. My parents, brother and sister, cousins, *titos* and *titas*, officemates, friends of friends and my friends. Almost everybody knows somebody who left or migrated for all kinds of personal reasons.

Maybe, most of them decided to stay in the new "place" because they liked what they saw and adapted to the new lifestyle.

When they come home and visit after years, they also see a lot of change in the cityscape. Flyovers, new buildings, roads, etc.

They may not be as big or as beautiful as the structures where they now come from, but still most of them say, "*Iba na! Nakakaligaw na dito sa atin.*"

They ask many questions when they're here, trying to catch up on acquaintances, relatives, places and events, during the time that they were away.

We can only be very enthusiastic, telling them stories of places and people that they've missed, new places that they must see simply because, "*Wala niyan sa States.*"

We help them see our world now, the distance we have traveled in time.

In a place that we call home and stayed the longest, and hopefully our entire lifetime, with my wife and children, I saw the place around me transform into what it is today.

I can still rememder Edsa without the flyovers, the deserted Commonwealth Avenue, Ayala Avenue without the newer buildings such as The Enterprise, Rufino Tower, RCBC Plaza, the new Stock Exchange Building, the Reclamation area at Roxas Boulevard and more.

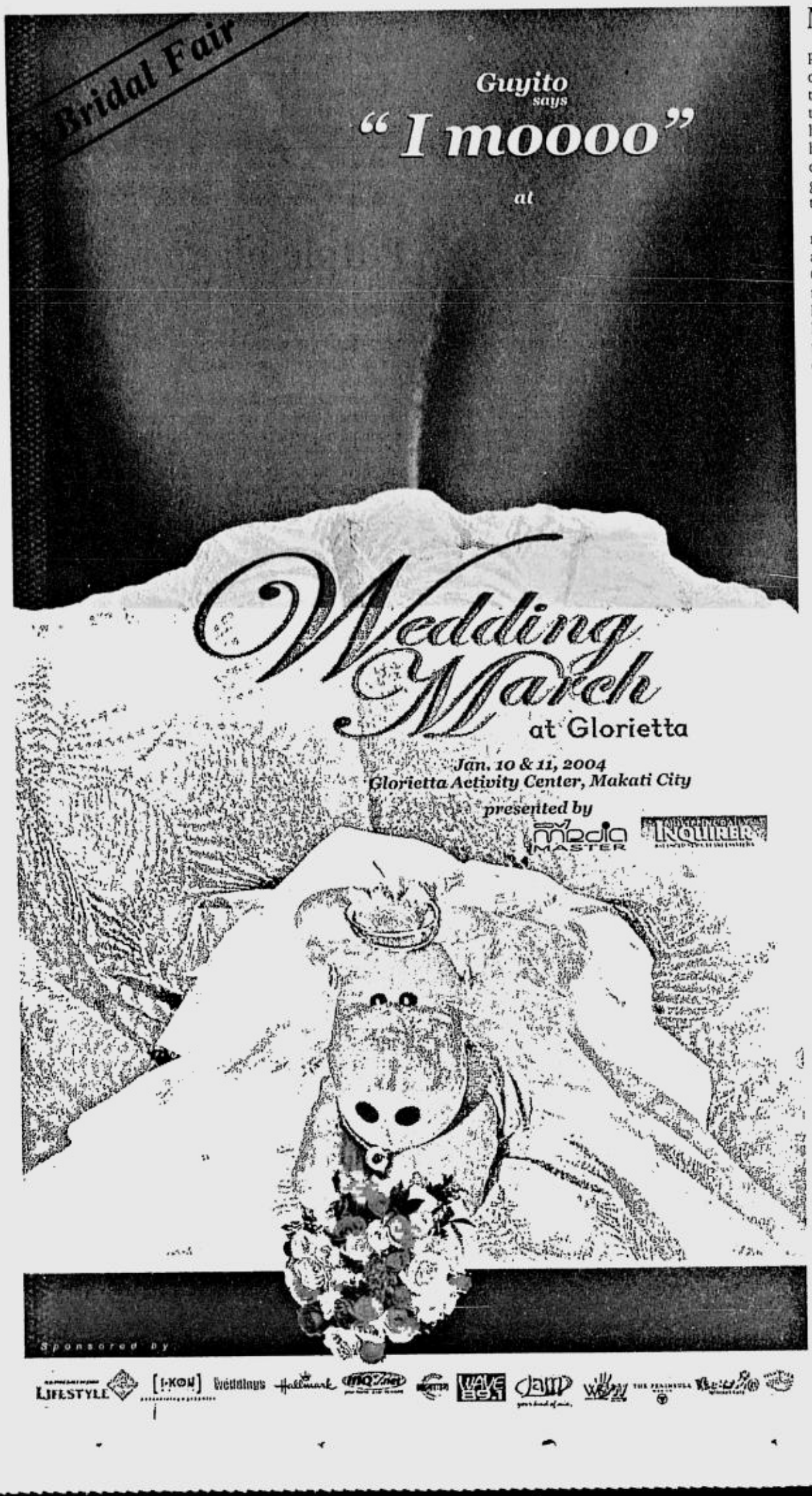
Before my very eyes, I saw the change not only with the things around me, but also with Filipinos that I know and see occasionally on a regular basis. I remember events that affected our lives, good or bad.

The privilege of experiencing the feeling of change as it unfolds, is a luxury that only time in a place can offer.

I hope that those who left could also see how their former "home" transformed in the eyes of a time traveler like me and many Filipinos who opted (or lacked the opportunity to travel) to stay.

But time lost is lost forever, and all I can say to them is "*sana makita mo rin ang nakikita ko ngayon balang araw*," before they leave and and do their own time traveling in their new found "home."

—LITO A. RONSAYRO, 33 Lansang St. North Susana Village, Diliman, Quezon City



5 PTV-4 execs charged before Ombudsman

By Armand N. Nocum

FIVE top officials of the government-owned television station National Broadcasting Network 4 were charged with graft before the Office of the Ombudsman for their failure to remit P42 million in dues and contributions from July 2002.

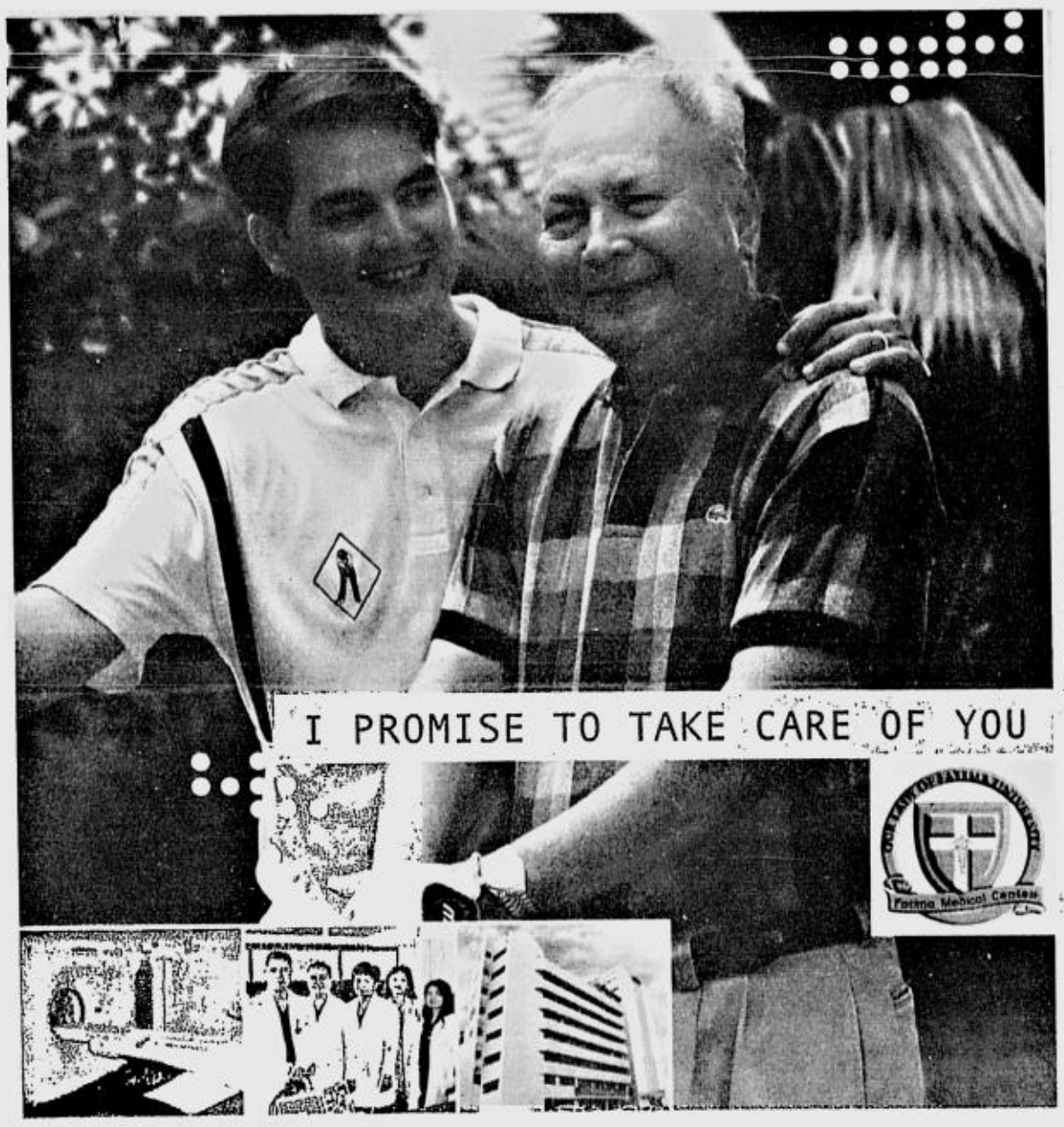
Charged were PTV-4 president Mia Concio, general manager Jose Isabelo, and board members Rolando Magat, Jean Kay dela Cruz and Rodrick Salazar Jr.

Thirteen members of the People's Television Employees' Association filed the case against the station's management for non-remittance of the dues which were deducted from their salaries.

In their complaint, the employees said the government network did not remit the contributions they made to the Government Service Insurance System (P23.8 million) from July 2002 to October 2003.

Also not remitted were P1.2 million in payments to PhilHealth; P6.4 in withheld taxes to the Bureau of Internal Revenue; P851,638 in premiums to Pag-Ibig, among others.

NBN employees also want the five suspended and charged administratively for "dishonesty and misconduct" while the graft investigation is ongoing.



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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, January 10, 2004
Saturday after Epiphany

1st Reading: 1 Jn 5:14-21
Gospel: Jn 3:22-30

Jesus went into the territory of Judea with his disciples. He stayed there with them and baptized. John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim where water was plentiful; people came to him and were baptized. This happened before John was put in prison.

Now John's disciples had been questioned by a Jew about spiritual cleansing, so they came to him and said, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, and about whom you spoke favorably, is now baptizing and all are going to him."

John answered, "No one can take on anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said: 'I am not the Christ but I have been sent before him.' Only the bridegroom has the bride; but the friend of the bridegroom stands by and listens, and rejoices to hear the bridegroom's voice. My joy is now full. It is necessary that he increase but that I decrease."

Commentary

When fifteen of us presented ourselves for entry into the Dominican order many years ago, naturally they asked us why we wanted to take such a step. One of my companions, only slightly more naive than the rest of us, replied that he didn't want to be a preacher. He had never heard any but diocesan priests at it. He hadn't realized then that OP stands for Order of Preachers! The humor and the humanity of it is that they only smiled and told him he was welcome.

I remember it when I read today's gospel passage. "No one can take on anything except what has been given him from heaven." Our own agendas are mostly maps for a low horizon, for who can know the future? God has more in store for us than we dare imagine—more and different, and more hazardous, and more wonderful. Our Faith does not tell us that we will get only what we bargain for; it tells us that everything is gift.

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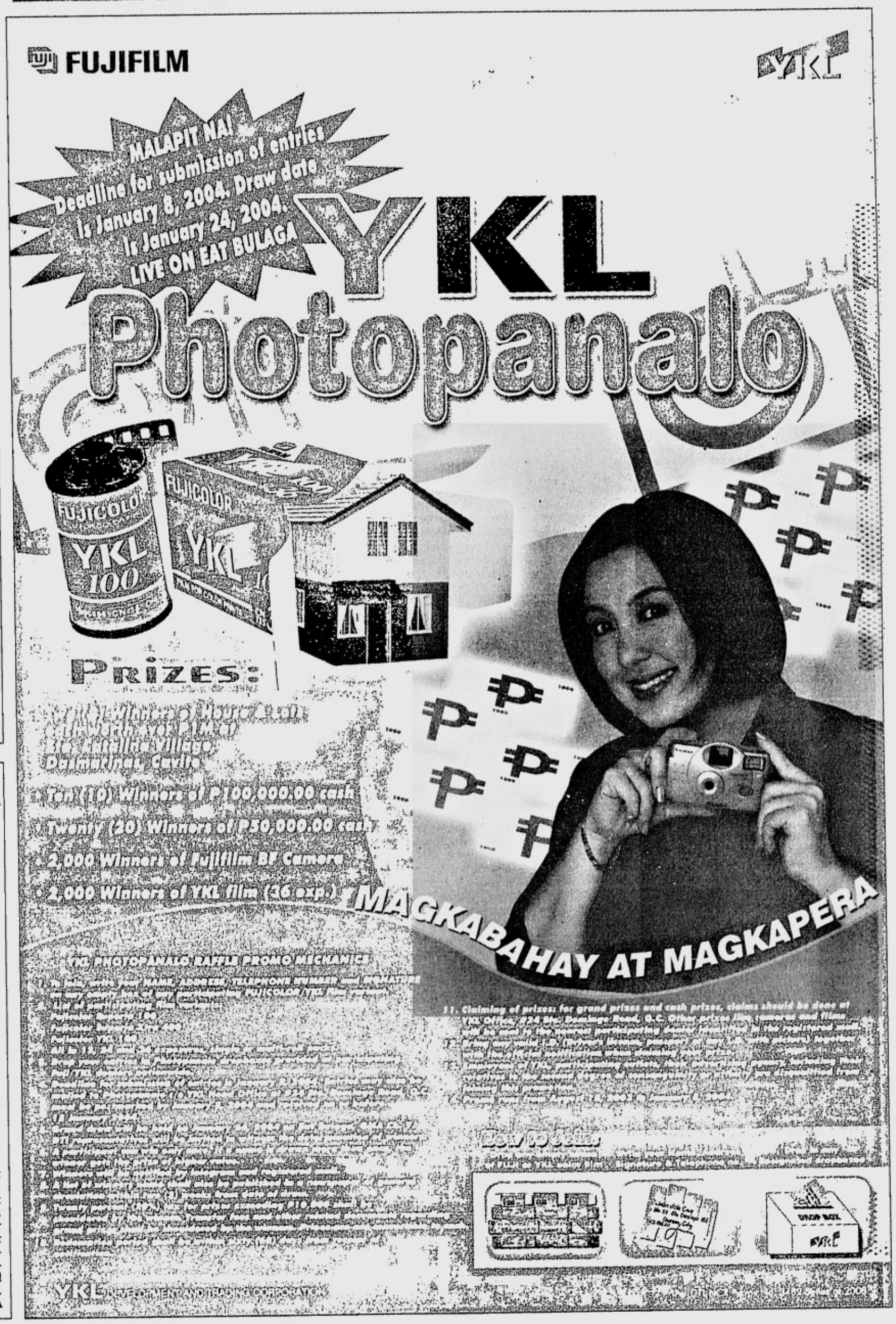
SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMES AGAINST CHASTITY)/REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—Sweetheart defense in rape cases—A close scrutiny of the transcripts of the proceedings shows that the supposed flaws or inconsistencies bear on relatively minor points and, even taken as a whole, they fail to debunk the gravamen of the accusation that appellant had carnal knowledge of the complainant through force or intimidation. Neither are we persuaded by appellant's claim that he and Gloriphine are sweethearts and that what transpired between them that early dawn of May 4, 1993 was a consensual sex. He presented witnesses who declared that they saw Gloriphine sitting on his lap; and that in another occasion, they saw him coming out of her house at 12:00 o'clock midnight. We are not convinced. A "sweetheart defense," to be credible, should be substantiated by some documentary or other evidence of the relationship—like mementos, love letters, notes, pictures and the like. Here, no such evidence was ever presented by appellant. Assuming that appellant and Gloriphine are sweethearts, it does not mean that he could not rape her. Such a relationship is not a guaranty that he will not assault and tarnish that which she holds so dearly and trample upon her honor and dignity. Indeed, a sweetheart can be forced to engage in sexual intercourse against her will. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez, Third Division, People vs Ayuda, G. R. No. 128882, October 2, 2003] BY R. B. VERA



Firm corners 3 big gov't computer deals

From page A1

from fees collected by the LTO.

The project was kept intact despite Estrada's ouster in 2001, and despite a change in the LTO leadership from Edgardo Abenina to ex-Philippine National Police chief Roberto Lastimoso.

Lastimoso's term

In a report dated Aug. 29, 2003, however, Commission on Audit director Khem Inok found various flaws in Stradcom's LTO contract during Lastimoso's term.

Inok's report said an audit team ordered the suspension of payment of P17.8 million for services rendered by Stradcom "due to contract deficiencies."

The report said the COA decided to order payment to Stradcom suspended "based on the observation that certain contractual stipulations, both in the original contract and in the subsequent amendment (sic) agreement were intrinsically flawed for having substantially deviated from the bid document and for having contravened pertinent provisions of the BOT law..."

The LTO, the COA report said, "appears to have granted unwarranted benefits to the contractor (Stradcom) by way of the following..."

1. "The frequency of payments (to Stradcom) was amended from more than two billings monthly to daily basis which constitute additional work and expenses for the LTO."

2. "Original date within which to commence the project was amended, thus condoning the delay..."

3. "The basis of payment... was originally based on the number of motor vehicles and drivers' licenses registered and handled... It was amended to be based instead on the total number of transactions processed by the IT facilities which could mean bigger income for the contractor at the expense of the public."

LTO employees' complaint

This was not the first time Stradcom's LTO contract came under fire.

In a complaint dated July 3, 2002 and submitted to Dario Rama, chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, a group of LTO employees calling themselves the LTO Contra Corruption Alliance accused Lastimoso of corruption in relation to the Stradcom contract.

The complaint said that based on year 2000 statistics of LTO transactions, the Stradcom "will collect from the public through the LTO an increase of P200 million per year for 10 years (until the year 2010) or a cumulative additional revenue of P2 billion over and above the present contract rate."

The group said Lastimoso made the overprice possible by ignoring the "technical advice" of LTO officials who recommended that the increase in LTO fees as a result of the computerization program be pegged at only 0.84 percent.

Lastimoso, the group said, issued memorandum circular RTL-MC-03468 dated July 11, 2003, immediately implementing a 16-percent increase in fees.

It said from October 2002 to July 2003, Lastimoso "alone" approved the payment to Stradcom of P240 million in computer fees "in direct violation of the COA directive" to suspend payments.

On March 21, 2003, Lastimoso directed Dolores Luarca, chief of the LTO's finance and management division, to "remit all collected computer fees to Stradcom Corporation..."

Final certificate

The complaint further claimed that while the original contract with the Stradcom provided that the LTO issue a final certificate of acceptance of information technology project (CAIF) once 90 percent of the project has been tested and accepted, Lastimoso issued the final CAIF on Feb. 10, 2003 "despite the protest of the project management and technical committee (of the LTO) that the system has not reached the mandatory 90 percent compliance level."

After issuing the final CAIF, the complaint said, Lastimoso convened the LTO's regional directors at the Caylabne Bay Resort in May 2003 to reaffirm the issuance of the final CAIF. Stradcom spent for that meeting, the complaint alleged.

After that meeting with the regional directors, "all members of the management and technical committees" who opposed the issuance of the final CAIF "resigned in disgust," according to the complaint.

Change of heart

In January 2002, however, Lastimoso was quoted as saying that he would order a review of the Stradcom contract—after finding out that from an average of 300 to 500 daily traffic apprehensions, "it (the average) ballooned to a high of 3,600 apprehensions a day."

In a transcript of a hearing on Sept. 4, 2001 at the House of Representatives, Cezar Quiambao, Stradcom chair, said Stradcom started implementing the project in early December 1998 and was "supposed to complete everything by Sept. 30, 2001" when Abenina was still LTO chief.

"When asked if Stradcom can really complete implementation within 26 days from today (Sept. 4, 2001), CTQ (Quiambao) replied that the systems application is 100 percent complete," read the transcript of the House hearing.

In a position paper submitted to the House in September 2001, Abenina and Quiambao said that following Estrada's order of Nov. 9, 1998 for the LTO to implement the computerization project, Stradcom had to "remobilize."

Stradcom said in the paper that "the implementation of the project was not without its challenges."

"The most compelling of these challenges were identified by Stradcom as early as December 19, 2000 when it wrote and requested the LTO to revise the implementation schedule," the paper said.

"It may also be noteworthy (to) recall, by judicial notice, the socio-political and economic predicament of the country during the preceding and succeeding months," it added. The administration of Estrada was collapsing at that time.

Incorporation date

The paper also revealed that Stradcom was incorporated on Jan. 6, 1998, more than a year after a notice of award of the project was issued by the LTO on Dec. 15, 1997, still under the term of Mr. Ramos, who hails from Pangasinan like Stradcom chair Quiambao.

Documents obtained by the INQUIRER showed that the award of the project was made initially not to Stradcom but to Strategic Alliance Development Corp. (Stradec), a company founded in 1994 and also headed by Cezar Quiambao. Stradec later formed Stradcom, owning 60 percent of the consortium with another firm, Comfac Corp., owning 40 percent.

LRA too

Despite findings of flaws and questions on the LTO project, the documents showed, Stradcom also found its way into the BOO contract to computerize the operations of the LRA under a new firm called the Land Registration Systems Inc. (Lares).

The LRA program is projected to cost P4.7 billion over a 13-year timetable.

Under the BOO scheme, Stradcom was to finance the project and enjoy a six-year tax holiday.

All loans contracted for the project would have an initial interest rate of 18 percent and dollar-denominated expenses were initially computed at a rate of P50 to $1.

Under the land-titling project, the Lares would develop a system called the Philippine Land Registration and Information System and deliver it to the LRA "and operate the same within a prescribed concession period."

"All expenses incurred in the development and subsequent operation of the project will be borne by the proponent (Lares)," said a summary of the project.

"To recover the investment, LRA will allow Lares to collect fees from the public in the course of a transaction involving the use of the computerized system within a 10-year concession period," the project summary said.

Concession period

"The concession period can be extended for another 10 years for a maximum of 50 years."

The project's objectives include reducing the amount of time for the issuance of certificates of titles from two days to two hours, registration of deeds or instruments from a day to two hours, approval of subdivision plans from two weeks to two days.

For the land titling project, Lares was formed by these companies—Stradec and Comfac (which formed Stradcom for the LTO project), Unisys Australia Ltd. (Philippine branch), and construction giant F.F. Cruz and Co. Inc.

According to a paper prepared by consulting firm Financial Catalyst Inc. in June 2002, the Lares project provided a clause that would protect the project's contractors from fluctuations in the peso-dollar exchange rate.

"Revenues to be generated by the project will be by way of local currency cash payments by the end-users (land. title holders)," the paper said.

"Thus, peso-dominated revenues needed to be adjusted to keep pace with the foreign currency-denominated costs which are directly and substantially linked to the peso/US dollar exchange rate," it said.

"In order to address this risk, the proposed service fees include an escalation clause enabling the project to similarly pass on such increased cost to the end-user."

And DFA

Stradcom made its way into yet another project, this time to computerize the issuance of passports and other travel documents by the DFA.

The DFA program has a price tag of P2 billion and a timetable of 10 years.

A paper entitled Information Memorandum prepared on April 9, 2002 said the DFA invited bidders to its Modernization of Travel Documents project.

BCA International Corp., a firm headed also by Stradcom chair Cezar T. Quiambao, won the bidding and designated the Phil. Passport Corp. (Philpass), a firm incorporated on Nov. 20, 2000, as the DFA project's designated company.

Same owner

The biggest owners of Philpass, according to documents, is the Quiambao-led BCA with 725,000 out of 12.5 million shares, and Quiambao himself with 799,999 shares.

According to a briefing paper on the DFA project, part of the winning contractor's income would come from rental of buildings, "including Philpass offices ... at P60 million per annum."

It wasn't clear where these buildings would be built or located.

STRADCOM INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS INC.

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Eric Gene C. Pilapil
Corporate Secretary

Rationing ...

From page A1

rains in the second half of May.

But if the rains don't come, there will be water rationing for Manila's 11 million residents.

If this happens, who would be affected most—the rich or the poor? In an interview yesterday with ANC, NWRB Executive Director Ramon Alikpala said: "It really depends on where you live. If you live in a high place, rich or poor, your water pressure would be low."

The authorities yesterday told the public: "Do not use bath tubs. Don't wash your vehicles daily."

No cause for alarm

President Macapagal-Arroyo assured: "There is no cause for alarm," dousing fears of an imminent water crisis. She noted that the government's efforts to jack up water supply and the public's cooperation in water conservation should avert water rationing in Metro Manila, Bulacan and Pampanga.

"We must urge conservation in the face of the threatened water crisis. We have to see through the impact of this problem on the average Filipino and insure that our communities are prepared," the President said.

Cloud seeding

Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun said the government has moved to address the water supply problem by undertaking cloud seeding operations to induce rainfall (costs are shouldered by private water concessionaires); tapping more ground water resources; and looking at the possibility of desalination.

Gozun said these measures coupled with greater public cooperation in conserving water should rule out the possibility of water rationing especially during the summer months when the Angat Dam water level could fall below the critical level of 180 meters.

She said rainfall levels in the past three months in Luzon, the country's largest island and home to nearly half the population, were only 65 percent of the average for the past eight years.

Plans to help farmers

On the impact of low water levels on agriculture, the President said the DENR, Department of Agriculture and National Irrigation Authority have teamed up to map out plans to help farmers.

The farm sector accounts for about 20 percent of domestic economic output but employs nearly half the Filipino work force. Agricultural output plunged in 1998 following the El Niño weather phenomenon the previous year.

Gozun said that unlike the El Niño dry spell in 1997, "we do not really notice the drought because it has been raining. However, rainfall levels are not enough." If the trend continued "there would not be enough water to spare for irrigation."

"Historically, we cannot expect strong rains over January, February and March," she said. The first heavy seasonal rains were expected to arrive in mid-May, she added. ***With reports from AP, AFP and Reuters***

Decide now, Supreme Court urged

From page A1

the oath of office of the country's top officials take place on that day.

In a statement, Pimentel said the release of the high court ruling "would put to rest the speculation on the fate of the automated election process and enable the Comelec to make preparations for the possible reversion to manual voting process."

If automated elections would push through, then the poll body would also have enough time to list the candidates in the official ballot.

Selective automation

But the principal author of the joint congressional resolution calling for selective automation repeated his concerns that the Comelec's insistence on nationwide automation has heightened the "risk of failure" of the May 10 national and local polls.

"The situation is serious," said Rep. Jesli Lapus (NPC, Tarlac), co-chair of the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Electoral Modernization.

"By the end of January, we can be more certain whether the risk of failure has gone up or down."

Barring a last-minute veto by President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Lapus-sponsored measure on selective automation will lapse into law today.

"If no veto is made by the President, we'll have selective automation," Lapus said in a phone interview yesterday.

Not postponable

A veteran election official yesterday said elections could not be postponed because the Constitution states that it should be held on the second Monday of May.

"The (Commission on Elections) cannot postpone the elections nationwide because the Constitution has fixed the date of the national elections ... We are moving toward nationwide automation and we are preparing fully," Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said yesterday.

"Whatever happens, we will read first what the Supreme Court decision is all about because we know that the Supreme Court ... and the Comelec cannot postpone the elections," Borra, chair of the Comelec's automation committee, said.

Asked if the poll body can still implement manual elections, the commissioner said that they would have "very limited time" to do so.

Downplay

His remarks came as Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and his spokesperson downplayed reports about the impending Supreme Court decision.

Abalos reiterated that reports that the high court was about to invalidate the automation contract were mere "conjectures," while spokesperson Ferdinand Rafanan backtracked on his earlier projection that elections would be postponed by at least two months if the high court ruling were adverse.

"We would not speculate on that because it has not yet come out," Rafanan said yesterday.

PDI hit

Rafanan, a lawyer who heads the Comelec information division, also lashed out at the INQUIRER for implying that he was the "ranking government official" who told the newspaper that the Supreme Court would be voiding the contract.

"I did not say that. You did not refer to me but the immediate paragraph mentioned my name, implying that I was the source ... You should clarify that," he said.

In yesterday's story, the government official the INQUIRER spoke to was described as "ranking"—not an agency spokesperson but somebody with much greater responsibilities.

No to manual

Borra said shifting to manual elections was not feasible at this point, because it wouldn't be easy to convert from one system to another.

"We have very limited time. We have very limited time. So we will see what will be the decision of the Supreme Court, we don't want to speculate," he said.

Asked repeatedly whether the Comelec can still hold manual elections, Borra pointed out that all their preparations were for automated elections.

"We have to order the dandy roll in 90 days and today is already January. We have to mail the ballot paper and we will not have enough time to hold the May election," he said.

Software not in yet

Borra remained confident that the country's first automated general elections would be successful but admitted that the necessary software was not yet available as of yesterday.

"We have the machines all ready and the softwares (*sic*) are being finalized for this thing, certification. We will be conducting in due time mock elections to test the software and the hardware as well as the process. So we are moving towards implementation of RA 8436 which is the modernization law," he said.

Mock polls

On the opposition's allegation that computerized elections would confuse voters, Abalos said the agency had been conducting demonstrations for various sectors and political parties.

"We have held demonstrations before the President, the Vice President and no one said anything about that ... Everyone was happy but now ..." he said.

To allay the fears of cheating, Abalos said that they plan to hold mock elections on Jan. 31.

This time, he said that he was thinking of using the names of Comelec commissioners in place of names of candidates to negate charges of "trending."

Final determination

Drilon said the high court will be the one to make the final determination on whether automated elections would push through or not—because of the pending congressional resolution.

Borra said President Macapagal-Arroyo has to act on it today.

"I think the President has to act by tomorrow or Jan. 11 so that the bill will not lapse into law after 30 days. So the decision is for either signing it into law ... (or letting) it lapse into law," he said.

Asked if the Comelec is prepared to implement "hybrid" elections, he said that the commission would be in a "tight" situation.

"Very tight," Borra said.

Prosecutors request

The National Prosecutors League of the Philippines (NPLP) has sought the Comelec's help to familiarize themselves with computerized elections.

Assistant Manila City Prosecutor Ferrer Co, NPLP chief, said his group asked Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. to conduct a seminar on the use of the automated counting machines that would be deployed during the elections.

Under the law, provincial and city prosecutors are required to serve as vice chairs of the board of canvassers, the body tasked to watch the counting of ballots and proclaim the winning candidates in local elections.

"We asked for a dialogue with Abalos to demonstrate how the counting machines will operate. We don't know yet our actual role in the elections with the automation," Co said.

"We are tasked to certify election returns but if the results would come from the machines, what is there for us to certify? You can't certify something (where) you don't have any participation," he added. ***With reports from Carlito Pablo and Philip Tubeza***

FOUR DIGIT
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(In exact order)
SUERTRES
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METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

MEGALOTTO 6/45
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Manila RTC winning back people's faith

By Tarra Quismundo

THE INCREASING number of cases filed before the country's biggest regional trial court cluster may indicate that the people are slowly beginning to put their trust once again in the country's justice system, according to a Manila court official.

"Every year, the number of filed cases increases," noted clerk of court Jennifer dela Cruz-Buendia. "It seems that the people now have already been made aware of the law, and they have greater faith in the courts."

The past year for the Manila Regional Trial Court meant more paperwork, more cases to deal with.

This monkey year, Manila's judges and court employees are bracing themselves for an even busier year, with the anticipated increase in the number of cases to be filed.

In 2003, a total of 12,950 criminal cases were filed before the 56 branches of the Manila RTC.

This number is a 16.5 percent increase—or an addition of 1,839—to the 11,111 total cases filed in 2002.

As in previous years, the bulk of the suits filed last year were estafa and drug-related cases.

Such cases each accounted for a fourth of the total number of filed cases—estafa cases numbered 3,311, while drug-related cases were pegged at 3,245.

Last year, there were 1,444 family cases, which included family disputes, child custody cases, and other cases involving minors.

The number of rape cases filed last year jumped by 60 percent, with 141 cases. The year before, 88 such cases were filed.

Other heinous crimes filed before the courts numbered 100.

Also, 1,824 cases of robbery, 711 cases of theft and hold-up, and 895 of illegal recruitment were filed.

Murder cases numbered 102, homicide 104, and frustrated homicide 214.

Buendia said that most of the cases filed last year, along with the other cases filed in recent years, are still on trial.

She said that some have already been dismissed, archived, settled by compromise agreement, withdrawn by the complainants or dismissed by the courts based on the merits of the cases.

But the RTC branches have yet to submit their reports on the number of cases that have been resolved last year.

From January to March last year, 1,026 criminal cases have been resolved in Manila RTC branches. Throughout 2002, 5,806 cases were decided in Manila courts.

"There has been a noticeable increase in the disposition of cases," Buendia said. "It seems that the courts have begun working harder, after having been harshly criticized."

A MAN is lifted up and carried away from the horde of devotees during the Black Nazarene procession in Quiapo, Manila. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Black Nazarene devotee dies

From page A16

dent Macapagal Arroyo and Sen. Noli de Castro, a Black Nazarene devotee.

De Castro was expected to join the procession, but the INQUIRER failed to spot him in the crowd.

Traffic in the area was snarled for hours.

The swelling crowd forced police to abandon a plan to keep one lane of the southbound lane of the Quezon Boulevard open to traffic. They instead redirected vehicles to Rizal Avenue.

The northbound lane of Quezon Boulevard remained open to traffic.

The Black Nazarene, which devotees believe to be miraculous, left the Quiapo Church at 1:45 after a Mass.

From there, the image was paraded around Quiapo accompanied by a sea of maroon-clad, towel-waving devotees, giving thanks to God for blessings received or affirming their faith.

Towels and handkerchiefs were thrown by devotees at the image, believing that these would attract some of its miraculous effects.

And despite the frenzy, the devotees said it was faith that grew in their hearts.

METROBRIEFS

2 die in failed buy bust

RICHARD Elnar, 28, a police informer connected with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, yesterday was shot and killed in a botched drug operation on Padilla Street near the Binondo Suite Hotel in Binondo, Manila. In the same encounter, PDEA agents killed drug suspect Enrique Esguerra, 43. Another suspect, Eric Dino, 38, is now fighting for his life at the Metropolitan Hospital in Manila. PDEA Task Force Hunter Director Reynaldo Jaylo said that the drug suspects shot Elnar when they realized that they were being double-crossed. Jaylo said the suspects probably discovered that the cash that Elnar had paid them with was actually made up mostly of strips of paper. Elnar had posed as a drug user who wanted to buy 50 grams of shabu from the suspects. Police also said that Dino is the suspect in the killing of Manila lawman Peter Ignacio.

Leila Salaverria

A good year for WPD

MORE inroads into the campaign against kidnapping, illegal drugs and terrorism. This was what Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong vowed to accomplish this year during yesterday's celebration of the district's 103rd anniversary. According to Bulaong, the WPD had stepped up its anti-crime campaign last year and had a good performance record. He said Manila used to have the highest crime rate. But that had all changed when the district moved down three notches to third place. Bulaong also boasted that no bank robberies had taken place in Manila, although several bank robberies had been pulled off in other Metro Manila cities.

Leila Salaverria

Arellano HS reunion

MEMBERS of the Arellano High School Class '59 will hold their Sapphire (45th) anniversary reunion at the Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila on Jan. 10, 2004, Saturday at 2 p.m. For details, please call Aida Rosal Zafra, tel. no. 941-9110, Estelita del Rosario, tel. no. 714-4740, Carmelita Bacani Trinidad, 850-9889, and Ding S. Tobias, tel. no. 681-6914.

Highway cops not doing their job

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

IF COPS were around, the road accidents at the South Expressway and Edsa that killed 10 people, including the nephew of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, could have been prevented.

There's a police unit that goes after speeders and drunk drivers on the highways, but it's not doing its job. The Traffic Management Group (TMG), formerly the Constabulary Highway Patrol Group (CHPG), has become useless.

The TMG is more concerned with going after stolen vehicles and vehicle thieves, called "carnappers," rather than apprehending drunk drivers and speed maniacs.

The TMG's No. 1 task is to make our highways accident-free.

But how can highways be safe from drunk drivers and speed maniacs when TMG cops are not on the lookout for them? These special traffic policemen are not patrolling the highways but loafing in the houses of their paramours, inside restaurants or bars, or *sabungan*.

There used to be a time when our highways were relatively safe. This was in the 1950s and 60s. Back then, highway patrolmen strictly enforced road safety laws.

The law enforcers who patrolled our highways in the 1950s and 60s belonged to the Traffic Control Group, or Trafcon, of the now defunct Philippine Constabulary (PC).

My Dad was a member of the PC Trafcon, forerunner of the CHPG. In his stint at the Trafcon headquarters in Camp Crame, my Dad was assigned with the Trafcon special teams that patrolled Highway 54, the old name of Epifanio delos Santos Ave. or Edsa.

My old man was so strict in enforcing traffic rules along Highway 54, he apprehended even the neighbors of his mother—my grandmother—who were bus drivers. The bus drivers were his former playmates or primary school classmates in Guadalupe, Makati, where he grew up.

"*Ang bagsik naman ni Ramon. Nakalimutan na niyang taga-Guadalupe siya* (Ramon is very strict. He's forgetting that he's from Guadalupe)," one of those he apprehended told my grandmother.

When Dad was transferred to Davao City, he didn't spare even the driver of the city mayor for speeding on the highway.

But father was not the only one who enforced traffic rules on the highway to the letter. All his fellow officers and their enlisted men subordinates were also the "terror" of reckless drivers.

Many years later, I would be proud of my Dad when I met Lt. Col. Rolando Abadilla, chief of the Metrocom Inteiligence and Security Group (MISG). I was assigned to cover the MISG by the Manila Bulletin as a police reporter in the late 1970s.

"*Tatay mo pala si Captain Tulfo. Naku, ilang beses akong hinuli niyan dahil sa pagkarera ng kotse sa highway noong tinedyer pa ako* (So, your father is Captain Tulfo. Gee, he apprehended me several times when I was a teenager for racing my car on the highway)!" Rolly Abadilla said. He was referring to his reckless youth in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, where my father was also assigned as a Trafcon officer.

Those were the days when reckless drivers would cringe at the sight of Trafcon patrol cars parked on the shoulder of the highway at any time of the day or night.

There would be less deaths on the highways if members of the Traffic Management Group were as efficient and dedicated as their predecessors at the Traffic Control Group of the defunct Philippine Constabulary.

* * *

Those who participated in the kidnap-slaying of Coca-Cola executive Betti Sy don't deserve to die by lethal injection. They deserve a more severe, inhumane punishment.

My informant in the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTAF) said that while Betti lay dying, one of the kidnappers raped her. Another kidnapper raped her even after she was already dead.

They are beasts, so they should be treated no other way.

NBI closes in on Llamas killer

By Leila Salaverria

THE MAIN suspect in the tragic killing a year ago today of Ateneo Law School graduate Jose Ramon Llamas remains free. But the National Bureau of Investigation has zeroed in on the location of the suspect, who is reportedly being hidden by his relatives and politicians close to them.

An NBI official privy to the case said Bashir Abdulrahman has been staying in Lanao del Sur, Mindanao, where he has relatives, since leaving Manila after Llamas' killing. He has also been spotted in Masiu, Lanao del Sur.

The area, said the source, is controlled by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The official also said that Abdulrahman's family is influential in the area.

"(Abdulrahman) cannot leave Lanao del Sur because he would not be safe, and nobody would help him hide if he leaves the area," the official said in Filipino.

The source said NBI men raided two houses in Lanao del Sur last year, but failed to catch the suspect.

The search for the suspect continues, with the military providing assistance, the source said. There is a P750,000 reward for Abdulrahman's capture.

Abdulrahman allegedly shot and killed Llamas last year following a vehicular accident on Taft Ave. in Pasay City.

Llamas' death became all the more tragic when the bar exam results were released in February last year. Llamas was among the few who passed.

Laundry woman's son needs help

JHONDY Ramos, 9, son of a construction worker and a laundry woman, is suffering from Tuberculosis and a kidney problem that doctors call Obstructive Nephrotic Syndrome.

Jhondy's condition took a turn for the worse when he contracted chickenpox. He is now confined at the Philippine General Hospital.

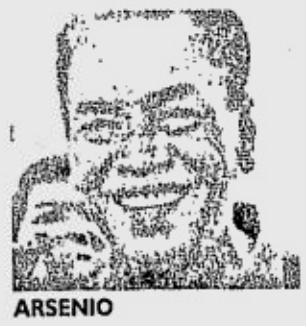
Doctors have recommended antiviral therapy for seven days. The cost is pegged at P32,680.

The Ramos family needs your help. Donors can reach them at Circumferential Road, Siete Media Street, Barangay San Isidro, Antipolo City; telephone number 630-4784 (c/o Aling Sally), or cell phone number (0919) 3682062, through Nida Cainlang.

Abalos to fight Abalos in May

By Luige del Puerto

BENHUR


ARSENIO

FAMILY can stand aside, politics is calling.

The battle of the polls in Mandaluyong City might be between two members of the Abalos clan who would be sitting on opposite sides of the political fence.

On one side would be mayoralty bet Dr. Arsenio Abalos, older brother of Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

On the other side would be Benjamin's son, Benhur, the outgoing mayor who has vowed to campaign for last-term congressman Neptali Gonzales II.

Dr. Abalos said he would not be convinced into withdrawing his mayoralty bid to give way to Gonzales, a long-time political ally of his brother and nephew.

The doctor said that although he respected an agreement between Benhur and Gonzales that they would switch places, he was never a part of it.

Based on that agreement, Benhur will run for Congress and Gonzales for mayor in May. Also, the younger Abalos will campaign for Gonzales—a move that will put him in a head-on collision course with his uncle.

Dr. Abalos confirmed that his nephew was still trying to talk him out of the race.

"*Labas na ako doon*," he said of the Abalos-Gonzales pact. "I am just here to offer residents a choice. I believe I know their problems," he added.

In a phone interview, Gonzales said there was nothing wrong with running against an Abalos in the mayoralty race.

Gonzales said it was within the rights of Dr. Abalos to seek the office of the mayor.

But Benhur had a different view.

On Thursday, he said it would not be right for an Abalos to fight a Gonzales.

"He (uncle) is from my house. Yet I am Boyet's campaign manager. It's not right," he said.

The mayor said he was still hoping that Dr. Abalos would ultimately back out.

Black Nazarene devotee dies

By Leila B. Salaverria

ONE PERSON died and dozens were injured when faith and frenzy came together yesterday during the annual Black Nazarene procession in Quiapo, Manila.

Nilo Guevarra, of RTR Village in Marikina City, succumbed to a heart attack after collapsing at 2:46 p.m. along Carlos Palanca Street, while walking alongside the 200-year-old statue of the cross-bearing Christ.

Guevarra was declared dead on arrival at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRMMC).

Over 50 persons had to be taken to the nine first aid stations set up for the event.

Dr. Chua Suan of the orthopedic section of the JRRMMC said he treated one person for unstable angina, which could lead to a heart attack, while another had to be treated for hypoglycemia. Several others fainted from heat, hunger and exhaustion but were quickly revived after being given liquids.

Police put the crowd between 100,000 to 200,000.

Hours before the procession, the Quiapo Church and the Plaza Miranda already began filling up with people.

Among them were Presi-

BLACK/ A15

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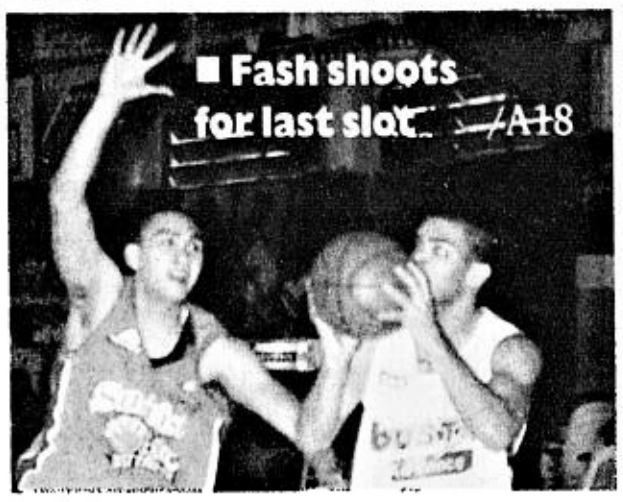
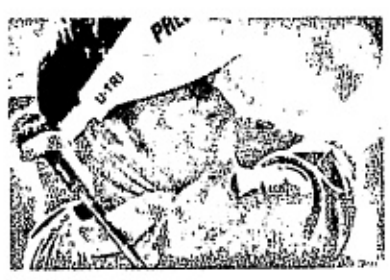


■ Fash shoots for last slot /A18



■ Appleby ahead by I /A23

■ Rockets roll past revamped Knicks /A25

■ Embattled taekwondo chief quits /A25

SIX-MONTH CONTRACT

Shell ignores BCAP outcry, taps US coach

By June Navarro

SHELL officially named American John Moran as its new coach yesterday even as it offered the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines a training program that would benefit the local coaches.

Team manager Bobby Kanapi said Moran, set to arrive yesterday from the United States, would be signed to a six-month contract as replacement for the resigned Perry Ronquillo.

Any decision to extend or terminate the services of Moran would be taken after a thorough evaluation of the American's performance in the first six months, added Kanapi.

As expected, BCAP president Chito Narvasa raised a howl of protest over Moran's appointment. But he toned it down when Shell proposed to take the lead in the development of Filipino coaches.

"I will broach the idea of training the local coaches to the PBA Board of Governors. Like players, the skills of the coaches should also be developed," Kanapi told the INQUIRER.

Kanapi had a lengthy discussion with Narvasa on the hiring of Moran Thursday afternoon and both parties are expected to meet again next week to settle the issue.

Narvasa, who once called the shots for the Turbochargers in the 1990s, has openly criticized the hiring of foreign coaches, stressing that it robs local mentors the opportunity to work in the PBA.

NARVASA

The BCAP tried but failed to block the hiring of foreign coaches in the past. Its complaint against Americans Bill Bayno and Paul Woolpert of Talk 'N Text serving as coaches in 2002 is gathering dust at the Department of Labor.

Moran was the PBA rookie camp director last year and served as the Turbochargers consultant. He will inherit the coaching staff left behind by Perry Ronquillo, who resigned in November.

The Turbochargers finished 10th and last in the 2003 season, and Moran has reportedly been given a free hand to form a competitive squad.

Shell owns the top pick in this year's rookie draft on Jan. 16, but an INQUIRER source said the Turbochargers are willing to trade the No. 1 pick for a slotman with the potential and caliber of an Asi Taulava, last year's Most Valuable Player from Talk 'N Text.

Prime ABC-5 exposure for PBA matches

ON prime time all week long.

The Philippine Basketball Association will get this much exposure on ABC-5 in the eliminations of the 2004 season, according to the league's new TV partner.

ABC-5 chair Tonyboy Cojuangco said games during the new schedule on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays will be shown on prime time and the provincial matches on Thursdays on a slightly delayed basis.

The first game of the Wednesday doubleheader that will not be shown will be aired on prime time on Friday while the league's greatest games and profiles of players will be the main staple on Monday and Tuesday.

"Basketball remains to be the No. 1 Filipino pastime so we decided to make it the sports staple in ABC-5," said Cojuangco, explaining his network's decision to join the league at a time when it is embarking on a new format.

The PBA has finally discarded its three-conference-a-year schedule and agreed to adopt

PRIME/ A18

VERSUS VIVA

Fash shoots for last slot

FASH Liquid Detergent tries to complete the semifinal cast when it takes on Viva Mineral Water-FEU today in the PBL Platinum Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

The Liquid Power, already assured of a playoff for the last berth with six wins in 11 games, tackle the Water Force at 2 p.m. with Rich Alvarez, hobbled by abdominal muscle pain the past two playing days, and fellow Atenean Wesley Gonzales expected to play pivotal roles.

If Viva, already out of the running, prevails, the Liquid Power can still advance if Montaña loses to Welcoat in the 4 p.m. game.

STANDINGS	W	L
Welcoat	8	3
Sunkist-UST	8	4
Blu Star	7	5
Fash Liquid	6	5
Montaña	5	6
Viva-FEU	4	7
ICTSI-La Salle	2	10

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Fash vs Viva-FEU
4 p.m.—Welcoat vs Montaña

Otherwise, the Liquid Power and the Jewels would slug it out tomorrow to decide the last semifinalist after Welcoat, Sunkist-UST and Blu Star.

There's actually no rule for a playoff to settle ties in the standings. But the quotient system simply won't apply this time because both Fash and Montaña split their two games with similar three-point wins.

But Fash coach Junel Baculi is confident his team won't go through sudden-death, especially after its morale-boosting 76-73 victory over ICTSI-La Salle last Thursday.

Judging from Fash's win over ICTSI, the Liquid Power should have no trouble slipping past the Water Force.

Marc Anthony Reyes

JENKINS Mesina (right) of Blu Star aims for a shot against Emerson Oreta of Sunkist-UST during their game last Thursday at the UST gym. RUDY ESPERAS

Prime ABC-5 exposure . . .

From page A17

ENCARNADO

a single NBA-style season starting in October based on a proposal by commissioner Noli Eala.

To prepare the teams for the new format, a transition tournament starting next month will be held.

Changes will have to be made on the TV schedule, however, because Eala said the old Wednesday-Friday-Sunday format will be observed in the semifinals and the finals.

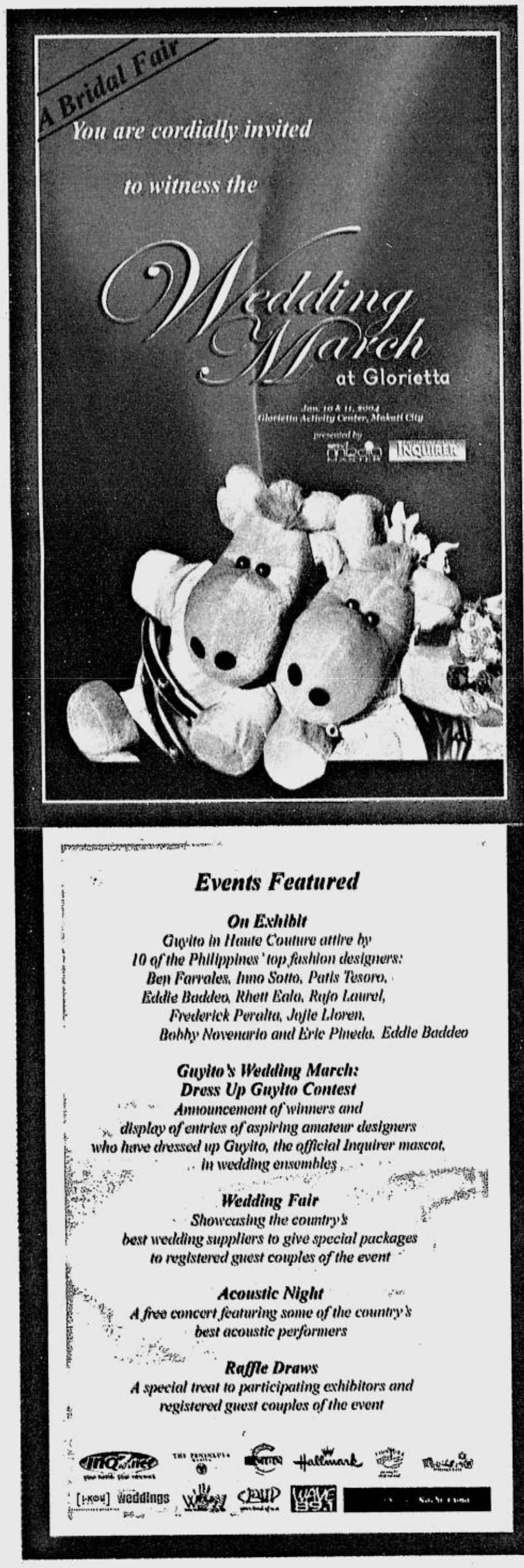
Newly installed PBA chair Buddy Encarnado said the terms were flexible.

"Let's talk about the qualitative aspect of the coverage. We've learned our lesson the hard way and we want to make sure we won't falter again this time," said Encarnado, who took over the helm from Jun Cabalan of Barangay Ginebra.

ABC-5 takes over from the NBN-4-IBC-13 consortium whose original three-year contract was terminated by the league last year after failing to live up to its P200-million commitment for 2003.

Also present during the conference were PBA vice chair Bert Manlapit, Cabalan and ABC officials led by Cojuangco, Richie Galura (COO) and project head Bobby Barreiro.

June Navarro



OLYMPIC QUALIFYING

Kazakhs lead world-class field

A WORLD-CLASS field plus invaluable assistance from the local government will make the 22nd Asian Olympic Boxing qualifying a sure knockout, organizers said yesterday.

"Save for minor kinks, I see no hurdles to the success of this gigantic event. Everything is in place and I look forward to a memorable gathering of Asia's leading amateur pugs," said Abap president Manny Lopez.

Aside from Kazakhstan, which won two Olympic golds and two silvers in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, other world-class teams competing in the tournament are Uzbekistan, Thailand and China, the two Koreas and Turkmenistan plus the vastly improved teams from Qatar, Iraq, Iran, Sri Lanka, India and Chinese-Taipei.

Twenty-four slots to the Athens Olympics will be contested by the 31 countries in the fold.

China and Pakistan will also host qualifiers for Asian boxers this year.

Anwar Chowdry, longtime president of the International Amateur Boxing Federation, will supervise the tournament. He will arrive on Jan. 11 and will be escorted by Abap chair and former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez to Palawan.

Lopez said the Abap has made extra efforts to invite countries hit by turmoil, notably Iraq and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the younger Lopez said he's elated about the tremendous amount of work being made by the provincial government of Palawan headed by Gov. Joel T. Reyes and the office of Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn in ensuring the success of the country's biggest sports event this year.

"Both Mayor Hagedorn and Governor Reyes have left no stones unturned in making the hosting successful. In behalf of Abap, I express my appreciation to both political stalwarts," Lopez said.

Reyes and Hagedorn are chair of the organizing committee, with Lopez as vice-chair and Vice Gov. David Ponce de Leon and Lucilo Bayron as members.

The tournament is supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, Accel, Revicon and Pacific Heights.

'Made' versus 'Project'

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

TALL men seem to always have the edge in the yearly jockeying for the top pick in the PBA draft. That's understandable. In a country where six-footers are almost an exception rather than the rule, players 6 feet 5 and above are almost shoo-ins to get preferential treatment.

So most likely, it's going to be that way again on Jan. 16 when the PBA Draft is held at the Glorietta in Makati.

Now if we say tall, we really mean tall, taller than even a 6-foot-5. Thus, two 6-7s and one 6-8 are among the hottest from a batch of 49 aspirants seeking entry into the PBA this year. They are 6-7s Ervin Sotto and Ranidel de Ocampo and 6-8 Joachim Thoss.

Now I've seen Sotto and De Ocampo play up close but not Thoss.

Sotto, who played for the disbanded Shark Energy Drink when my son Dayong was an assistant coach of that team that won three PBL crowns under the mentorship of Leo Austria, has the makings of a great player. The one good thing about Sotto is he cannot only rebound. He can also shoot, both from the perimeter and from afar. Not many tall Filipino players can sink baskets from three-point country. That's one area where Sotto beats the opposition.

De Ocampo? Unlike Sotto, he is cut out as a center. If you need an honest-to-goodness slotman, then De Ocampo is it.

I understand Shell has the first crack at the 49-player pool. And I heard Shell, in a slump the last two years or so, is shopping for a center. If it sticks to its shopping list, then De Ocampo should be it for the Turbochargers. But if it wants a player that can switch so easily into a forward from center, then Sotto should be it.

Thoss? As I said, I hardly know him. But at 6-8, he should be considered seriously. I must insist, too, that he should be a cinch to land among the Top 5, if not Top 3, in the drafting order.

But I regret to say that although Sotto and De Ocampo have the so-called built-in advantage over their rivals because of their ceiling, the two are still considered "project players." Meaning, you need to work double-time to carve them into what you want them to be: centers who can dominate. They are diamonds with still lots of rough edges that need polishing. In short, their potentials have yet to be fully tapped. Choosing them would mean you need to invest on time. Thus, in that regard, for the meager knowledge that I know about Thoss, I must reiterate that Thoss should be in the league of Sotto and De Ocampo: A "project player," too.

Now there are two more players who could crowd the three for the top draft pick—the 6-2 James Yap and the 6-5 Rich Alvarez.

In Yap, you have an explosive natural forward who can win games if he wants to. You will need the likes of the late Ed Ocampo to stop him from scoring baskets at will.

In Alvarez, you have a power forward who can rebound at the same time. In fact, he can become the PBA version of Dennis Rodman, the NBA rebounding king for years. That is, if Alvarez puts his head into it.

Yap and Alvarez don't only seem cut out for a PBA job. They are destined for greatness.

In short, in Yap and Alvarez, you don't doubt their ability to blend immediately with your veterans. Yes, they'll be your rookies, but boy oh boy, they can move and think like veterans already. Cruel it may seem, but they are even very much better than most of the league's top players right now.

Their records speak for themselves: Yap was the UAAP Most Valuable Player last year, Alvarez the UAAP back-to-back MVP in 2000 and 2001. In short, Yap and Alvarez are the so-called "made players."

But of course I'm saying all this because I've already seen them play—Sotto, De Ocampo, Yap and Alvarez. As for the rest of the candidates, like the much-ballyhooed Denver Lopez, a 6-1 point guard with a US NCAA Division I stint to boast of, my knowledge of them is limited.

After Shell, Purefoods gets the next crack at the pool. And then FedEx. And so on and so forth.

Sotto, De Ocampo, Yap and Alvarez are marquee players. But there's such a thing as picking someone that a coach needs. Seemingly, Shell needs a center. Purefoods, too, I guess. In case Shell gets Sotto and Purefoods De Ocampo (Thoss is in the running?), then it's a tossup between Yap and Alvarez for FedEx.

If I were the coach of either of the three teams, I'd rather go for the "made player" than the "project player."

I believe in the saying, "Better safe than sorry."

Nady 3rd man in Gamboa-Arce tiff

A STELLAR list of officials have been appointed to work tomorrow's World Boxing Council junior flyweight championship pitting reigning titlist Jorge "Travieso" Arce and Filipino challenger Joma Gamboa at the Banamex of the Hipodromo of the Americas in Mexico City, Mexico.

Veteran referee Jay Nady, a fixture in many Las Vegas fights, will be the third man in the ring according to WBC executive secretary Mauricio Sulaiman.

Nady, who refereed the Luisito Espinosa-Carlos Rios bout in Kidapawan City, had also worked on the Fernando Vargas-Felix Trinidad battle.

The three judges are Ray Hawkins (Texas), Peter Trematerra (Florida) and Gerald Ritter (Oklahoma).

The Gamboa-Arce undercard pits Jorge Kahwagi versus Anthony Cooks, while Antonio "Neighborhood" Rock battles Julio Cesar "Lobito" Cardona.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Thai bets prevail in jungolf meet

ANUSORN Songsem of Thailand closed out with a 75 yesterday to capture overall honors in the Samsung Philippine International Junior Golf Championship.

With his 3-over-par effort at the 6,774-yard Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's East course that went with his earlier scores of 79, 77 and 79, Songsem wound up with 310 to win the event's most coveted title.

Chitratanatham Chakrit, Songsem's compatriot, ruled Class A after shooting a final round 80 for a 311 total. He had earlier rounds of 77, 80 and 74.

Songsem and Chakrit went on to capture the team trophy with 621. Gan Hsien Loong Andy and Ng Choo Sian Daniel made 652 to power Malaysia to second spot with 652.

Carlos Fabregas scored a last-day 81 to give the Philippines one of its four titles with 336. Second was Cebu's Edsel Tan with 88 and 347, followed by Hong Kong's Alvin Cheung with 85 and 349.

The Philippines' Maria Andrea Unson birdied the second extra hole to nip compatriot Nicole Clara Serapio in their sudden-death playoff for the 12 and under girls' Division 2 tiara.

Unson closed out with an 83 and Serapio scored a final round 78 to force the sudden death with 244 in the four-day event with Samsung as the title sponsor.

Other backers were Cebu Pacific, Pagcor, Pacsports, Morella Tours, Raul Jorge, Sysu International, Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Triplex Tent and Golf Gallery.

The traditional closing ceremony followed after the final flight completed its round with Boy Cantada handing out the trophies to the different champions.

Top 2 seeds pull through

MARAWI CITY—Top seed Johnny Arcilla breezed past Kuto Bauti, 6-1, 6-1, and second seed Joseph Victorino outclassed Shawie Taugurao, 6-1, 6-0, yesterday to advance to the third round of the P200,000 first Gov. Mamintal "Mike" Adiong Cup National Open at the Mindanao State University Tennis Center here.

Arcilla will next play No. 14 Miguel Narvaez, a 6-1, 6-0 winner over Paul Malinis, while Victorino will meet No. 15 Joseph Arcilla, who won by default over Marlon Alburo.

In other matches, third seed Adelo Abadia beat Bajohle Ramero, 6-3, 6-0; No. 4 Rolando Ruel Jr. defeated Laurence Magaway, 6-2, 6-2, No. 5 Alexander Lazaro downed Danilo Sajonia, 6-2 (ret.), No. 6 Pop Sabandon overwhelmed Butch Asentista, 6-1, 6-2, No. 7 Elbert Anasta beat Ruel Rubillar, 6-4, 6-4, No. 8 Chiemel Mantua defeated Cesar Craiz, 7-5, 6-1, and No. 9 Michael Mora III clobbered Nelson Taculas, 6-1, 6-2, to also earn third-round berths.

PAGULAYAN: Come-from-behind victory PDI PHOTO

Bata, Alex post wins

FILIPINO ace Efren "Bata" Reyes and Fil-Canadian Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan won their first matches and stayed in the winner-side bracket of the United States Professional Pool Players Association (UPPA) Pro Tour Championships at the Bicycle Casino in Bell Gardens Los Angeles, California.

Hall of Famer Reyes defeated John Troy, 11-2, in the opener while Canadian Open champion Pagulayan came from behind to beat Tony Crosby, 11-8, Friday. Another Filipino, Amang Parica, and four-time world champion Johnny Archer drew first round byes.

Crosby missed the crucial No. 7 ball in the 14th rack, allowing the 25-year-old Toronto-based Pagulayan to level the game at 7.

Reyes is scheduled to face Jeremy Jones, who earlier beat Ed Scott, 11-2, in the next round. Pagulayan will meet Arturo Rivera, 11-4 winner over Luc Salvas.

Other results saw 2001 World Pool champion Mika Immonen of Finland nip local pro Tang Hoa, 11-2, and Buddy Hall blank Danny Kuykendall, 11-0. Immonen and Hall clash in the next round.

Sharing the limelight are Max Eberle, who outlasted Ian Costello, 11-6, and Johnny Kang, who crushed Bernardo Chavez, 11-6. Eberle and Kang will battle each other in round 2.

Archer will be facing Dan Wallace, who earlier ousted Filipino entry Edgar "Malabon" Acaba, 11-9, while Parica will be meeting Jay Brumstetter, who won over Oscar Dominguez.

The $40,000 9-ball event uses the winner break, race-to-11 format. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

RP team leaves for ABC caging

THE PHILIPPINE women's team leaves for Japan tomorrow to compete in the 20th Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women set in Sendai City from Jan. 13-19.

Bronze medalists in last month's Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, the Filipinas will be handled anew by Bai Cristobal with assistance from Rad Pasco and Haydee Ong.

Members of the team are Susan Ma. Bambico, Joan Grajales, Estrellita Enriquez, Shella Esteban, Cherrylyn Lubiano, Matilde Carreon, Minerva Narciza, Marsha Faustino, Aileen Libornio, Sylvia Marie Valencia, Marites Gadian and captain ball Emelia Vega.

Accompanying the team are Basketball Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim, Fiba referee Richard Villanueva and Myra Balaquiot, liaison officer.

China ruled the 2002 edition of the event, routing Japan, 105-76, for the title at the Huamark indoor stadium in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Philippines will be bracketed in Group II with India, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

China is in Group I with Korea, Japan, Chinese-Taipei and Thailand.

Marikina baseball tilt lures 10 teams

MARIKINA CITY—Ten teams see action when the First Marikina Youth (Inter-Barangay) Baseball Tournament gets under way on Jan. 24 at the Marikina Sports Center.

Organized by the Marikina Youth Baseball/Softball Foundation Inc. (MYBSF) and supported by Marikina Rep. Del de Guzman, the tournament will be for boys 11-12 years old.

Baseball clubs from the Barangay of Jesus dela Peña, Barangaka, Sto. Niño, Malanday, Nangka and San Roque plus guest teams from the Marist School, Manila Boys Town and Cainta are vying in the tournament.

Baseball leaders Hector Navasero of the Philippine Amateur Baseball Association, Rep. Harry Angpin of ASA-Phil, Rodolfo Tingzon Jr. of Philippine TOT Baseball Foundation and Bachus Ledesma of the Titans Philippines were invited to the opening rites.

The MYBSF was set up by engineer Enrico Florencio primarily to assist parents in guiding and disciplining the youth through baseball.

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4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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8 THE GRUDGE
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MANO PO 2

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3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
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5 GAGAMBOY
6 MANO PO 2
7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 MALIKMATA
10 BRIDAL SHOWER

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2 GAGAMBOY
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
6 FANTASTICMAN
7 CRYING LADIES
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MALIKMATA
11 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
12 FILIPINAS

SM CITY DAVAO 2970990

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3 MANO PO 2
4 CRYING LADIES
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2 MALIKMATA
3 FILIPINAS
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
6 MALIKMATA
7 GAGAMBOY
8 MANO PO 2
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
11 CRYING LADIES
12 FILIPINAS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2884092

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2 MALIKMATA
3 FILIPINAS
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

SM CITY ILOILO 3389422

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 RESERVED
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 CRYING LADIES
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 RESERVED
8 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MANILA 5228240

1 THE GATHERING
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 MANO PO 2
8 MALIKMATA
9 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
10 FANTASTICMAN
11 CAPTAIN BARBELL
12 GAGAMBOY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8582854

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2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 MANO PO 2
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 4424555

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2 MALIKMATA
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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1 LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING
11:00 FS/11:30 MF/3:20/7:10/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/2:20 END

2 LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING
10:10 FS/10:40 MF/2:30/6:20/9:40 LFS/10:10 LMF/1:30 END

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2 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 1:30, 5:40, 9:30
3 BUFFALO SOLDIER
4 THE GATHERING 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
5 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 10:15, 2:10, 6:05, 10:00
6 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 1:00, 5:00, 9:00, 12:20
7 FILIPINAS 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 CRYING LADIES 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
9 BRIDAL SHOWER 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
10 MALIKMATA 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50

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3 BUFFALO SOLDIER
4 THE GATHERING - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00
6 BRIDAL SHOWER - 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
7 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00

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MANO PO 2	2	HOMECOMING
MALIKMATA	3	GAGAMBOY
BRIDAL SHOWER	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

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	Dasmariñas	Imus
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CRYING LADIES	2	LOTR3
BRIDAL SHOWER	3	THE GRUDGE
CAPTAIN BARBELL	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
FILIPINAS	5	MALIKMATA
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Bacolod (034)441-0458/59 / **Iloilo** (033)335-8070 to 78

	Bacolod	Iloilo
LOTR3	1	LOTR3
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JEEPERS CREEPERS	3	CRYING LADIES
THE GRUDGE	4	LOTR3
CRYING LADIES	5	FILIPINAS
MANO PO 2	6	BRIDAL SHOWER

Star Mills San Fernando Pampanga (045)875-1927 / (045)961-5270

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 FILIPINAS
3 CRYING LADIES
4 MANO PO 2
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6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

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"HANGING TIME" STARTS JAN. 14!

LOTR: The Return of the King BOXOFFICE CHAMPION of the World

January 2-4, 2004 Around the World Round Up -by Kenan Bresnan

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King, after just two weeks is nearing $400m at the international box office. The final installment in the **The Lord of the Rings** trilogy has amassed $390.4m to date thanks to a $72.6m weekend! off 8,826 screens in 45 territories from Thursday-Sunday (Jan. 1-4). **Return of the King** has acquired this achievement by remaining a clear No. 1 in 38 markets.

The Peter Jackson-helmed epic grossed $13.7m over the long weekend in the U.K. from 1,299 screens for a stunning $72.2m total.

The picture grossed $10.6m from 1,337 screens in Germany pushing its total to $64.6m. In France the guberblockbuster grossed $5.4m from 972 screens pushing its total to $39.1m. Spain's $5.4m weekend from 512 boosted the market tally to $29.8m. Through its second weekend in Australia **The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King** has grossed $19.3m off a $5.6m weekend from 453 screens.

In Sweden the film earned another $3m over the weekend from 169 screens for a phenomenal $14.7m total. In Denmark **Return of the King** has grossed an estimated $10.5m and in Mexico the film took in $2m over the weekend from 550 screens for a terrific $12.1m. Taiwan added $722,000 from 198 screens for a near record $9.6m total. It should be noted that it remained No. 1 for the third consecutive week there, which is not very common in Taiwan and openers are the biggest grossers.

Smaller markets are proving to be **Return of the King's** most surprising strength. In South Korea it has already grossed $22.6m off a $3.8m weekend on 330 screens.

In other Asian territories, the film was the boxoofiice champ. Outgrossing every film released in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong

In openings **Return of the King** let no expectations down. In Poland, where the film waited until after the Christmas season, which is traditionally the lowest season at the Polish box office, **Return of the King** grossed a magnificent $2.3m from 150 screens. In Argentina the film grossed $954,000 from 108 screens.

Meanwhile the US domestic gross has reached $ 300.000.000, and this figure has tied with SPIDERMAN as the fastest film to reach the $300m mark in motion picture history.

The film has remained in the #1 spot for 3 weeks already in the US.

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Cebu Boardwalk motocross series starts tomorrow

THE CEBU Boardwalk Motocross Series kicks off tomorrow making the track of the Cebu Boardwalk project as a regular venue for motocross races locally and internationally.

This was announced by Eric A. Cruz, executive vice president of the F. F. Cruz and Co. Inc., which will soon put on course the development of the 180-hectare Cebu North Reclamation area into the Cebu Boardwalk—Metro Cebu's newest commercial and leisure district and another Philippine pride.

The kickoff race of the four-leg Cebu Boardwalk Motocross Series is part of the much-awaited Sinulog 2004 festivities. About 100 top riders from all over the country are expected to participate in the event to be held at the North Reclamation Area along Ouano Avenue in Mandaue City.

The excitement being generated for the motocross series mirrors in part the anticipation for the Cebu Boardwalk, a masterplanned landscaped business and leisure hub with the unique marina and promenade fronting the Mactan Channel.

The project by F.F. Cruz and Co. Inc. will be a fusion of similar waterfront development concepts such as the Boardwalk of Atlantic City, the Clark Quay and Harbor Quay of Singapore, and the Irvine Spectrum of Los Angeles, combined with local Cebu architecture to make a distinctly unique Philippine destination.

H'field forgives Tyson

HYDERABAD—On a mission to spread love, four-time world heavyweight boxing champion Evander Holyfield said Friday he had forgiven Mike Tyson for biting his ear in an infamous 1997 bout and would even forgive terrorist leader Osama bin Laden for the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the United States.

In the southern Indian city of Hyderabad to visit a home for 3,000 children run by American Christian evangelist A. K. Paul, the former champ told reporters he was on a mission of "spreading love, knowledge and forgiveness, because knowledge and forgiveness bring power."

Holyfield said he regretted that most boxers today are fighting for the love of money rather than the love of sport.

Referring to the June 1997 title fight in which Tyson earned a ban from boxing after biting off a part of his ear, Holyfield said lawyers had advised him to sue his opponent for a vast amount of money.

"But I refused, telling them that I have responded to him by forgiving him," he said. *AP*

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2 BRIDAL SHOWER	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3		THX 2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THX 3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
4 CRYING LADIES	4 BUFFALO SOLDIER		4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
	5 THE GATHERING	M. BUTTERFLY Jan. 9, 10 & 11	5 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	5 BRIDAL SHOWER
	6 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			
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ACT-2 KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
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ACT-4 HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
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A MAN APART
QUEZON-1 BERTUD NG PUTIK
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A BRIDAL SHOWER
B LORD OF THE RINGS
C

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CINEMA-2 MALIKMATA
CINEMA-3 FANTASTIC MAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) LOTR 3 RETURN OF THE KING
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CINEMA-3 KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

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CINEMA-4 MALIKMATA

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(PARANAQUE) SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1 KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2 MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4 SELDA

FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNER !!!
BEST VISUAL EFFECTS • BEST EDITING
BEST SOUND • BEST MUSICAL SCORE

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | This movie contains scary scenes that may not be suitable for very young viewers. parental guidance is proposed

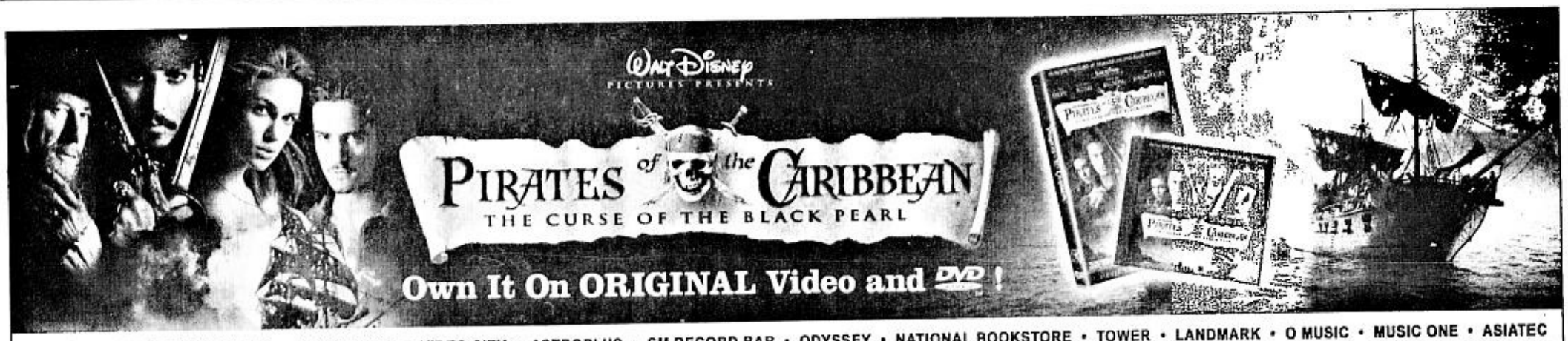
MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

The most awaited film of the New Year
now showing
in over 300 theaters nationwide.

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed

THIS FILM IS BREAKING BOXOFFICE RECORDS.
$300,000,000
US Boxoffice in just 17 days
$400,000,000
International Boxoffice in just 15 days
Soon to become the biggest boxoffice champion of all time.

Never in the history of Hollywood filmmaking has there been a film that garnered so many STARS from film critics.



AVAILABLE AT THE FF. OUTLETS: ASTROVISION • VIDEO CITY • ASTROPLUS • SM RECORD BAR • ODYSSEY • NATIONAL BOOKSTORE • TOWER • LANDMARK • O MUSIC • MUSIC ONE • ASIATEC
SHOPWISE • EVER DEPARTMENT STORE • SM APPLIANCE CENTER • SM SUPERMARKET • MAKRO • AMERICAN HOME VIDEO • SPECTRA • 7-ELEVEN • VVI SHANGRI-LA KIOSK and other VIVA VIDEO OUTLETS

APPLEBY fires 7-under-par 66. AFP

Appleby ahead by 1; Woods 5 shots off

1st round scores:
66—Stuart Appleby; 67—Darren Clarke; 68 Kirk Triplett, Scott Hoch, Justin Leonard, Vijay Singh; 69—Shigeki Maruyama, John Huston, Adam Scott, Fred Couples, Davis Love III; 70—Retief Goosen, J.L. Lewis, Shaun Micheel, Peter Jacobsen, Jim Furyk; 71—Chad Campbell, Ben Crane, Tiger Woods, Mike Weir; 73—Tommy Armour III, Craig Stadler, Ben Curtis, Rory Sabbatini, Steve Flesch, Kenny Perry, Frank Lickliter II, Ernie Els; 74—Jonathan Kaye; 76—Bob Tway

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Stuart Appleby went four years before returning to the winners-only Mercedes Championships. The way he played Thursday, he might not have to wait that long.

As the Kona winds fooled Tiger Woods and made it difficult on the elite field, Appleby recovered from a tough start to the new season with six birdies on the back nine for a 7-under 66 and a one-stroke lead over Darren Clarke.

Appleby, who attributed his four-year drought to low intensity, came on strong at the end of 2003 with two straight runner-up finishes and a victory in Las Vegas. The off-season was short, especially with the Presidents Cup, and he had no trouble getting his game into shape for the first tournament of the year.

Woods was running hot after watching his first round of the year fall apart on the par 5s. He twice hit into hazards, turning simple birdies into a bogey and double bogey, then recovered on the final hole with an eagle from 20 feet to finish at 2-under 71.

"Nothing went right," Woods said. "I either hit great shots or horrific ones. It was not a relaxing round of golf. The positions I put myself in today were very stressful."

He wasn't alone in his misery.

Defending champion Ernie Els, who won with a record 31-under par last year, had to finish strong for a 73.

Vijay Singh, meanwhile, kept right on going.

Despite missing several birdie chances, the big Fijian finished with a 5-under 68, along with Scott Hoch, Justin Leonard and Kirk Triplett. AP

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City — Tel. No: 8981440-41 — DOLBY DIGITAL

LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 1:45, 5:30, 9:15	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 12:15, 4:00, 7:45	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 1:00, 4:45, 8:30
LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:45	BUFFALO SOLDIERS R13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 2:30, 6:15, 10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF R.A. NO. 9167
(AN ACT CREATING THE FILM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES)

Pursuant to the authority of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) under Section 19 of R.A. 9167, otherwise known as the "Law Creating the Film Development Council," the following Rules and Regulations are hereby promulgated:

Article 1 - General Provision

Section 1. *Statement of Policy and Objectives.* The State guarantees freedom of expression. Towards this end, the State shall promote and support the development and growth of the domestic film industry, recognizing its role as an effective medium to uplift aesthetic, historical, cultural and social values and better understand and appreciate the Filipino identity.

Article 2 - Definition of Terms

Section 2. *Definition of Terms.* As used in these Rules, the following terms are defined as follows:

(a) THE ACT - An Act Creating the Film Development Council of the Philippines, Defining its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes (Republic Act No. 9167)
(b) COUNCIL - The Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) created by Republic Act 9167
(c) BOARD - The Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB), which shall evaluate and grade films submitted to the Council.
(d) FEATURE FILM - The principal motion picture shown on a program with other pictures
(e) HIGHLY URBANIZED CITIES - Cities with a minimum population of two hundred thousand (200,000) inhabitants, as certified by the National Statistics Office, and with the latest annual income of at least Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000 00) based on 1991 constant prices, as certified by the city treasurer, and as defined in the Local Government Code of 1991
(f) INDEPENDENT COMPONENT CITIES - Those component cities whose charters prohibit their voters from voting for provincial elective officials, as defined in the Local Government Code of 1991
(g) AMUSEMENT TAX - Tax collected from the proprietors, lessees, or operators of theaters, cinemas, concert halls, circuses, boxing stadia, and other places of amusement at a rate of not more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross receipts from admission fees
(h) THEATER OR CINEMA - An establishment devoted exclusively to the exhibition of motion pictures
(i) PRODUCER - A business executive engaged in the production of motion pictures, usually exercising final authority over all activities entailed in the making thereof

Article 3 - The Film Development Council

Section 3. *Meetings.* The Council shall meet regularly at least once a month or as often as necessary at the call of the Chairperson or a majority of the members. In the absence of the Chairperson, the members present constituting a quorum may choose a presiding officer from among themselves. A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum to do business and to carry out its functions.

Section 4. *Voting.* The Council shall act as a collegial body. In the conduct of meetings, the Chairperson shall not vote except to break a tie.

Section 5. *Specific Powers and Functions.*

(a) To establish and implement a Cinema Evaluation System applying the criteria under Section 11 of the Act;
(b) To develop and implement an incentive and reward system for producers based on merit to encourage the production of quality film;
(c) To establish, organize, operate and maintain domestic and international film festivals, exhibitions and similar activities.
(d) To encourage and undertake activities that will promote the growth and development of the domestic film industry and promote its participation in both domestic and foreign markets;
(e) To develop and promote programs to enhance the skills and expertise of Filipino talents necessary for quality film production;
(f) To prescribe procedures for the exercise of its powers and functions as well as the performance of its duties and responsibilities;
(g) To determine the Council's organizational structure and staffing pattern and appoint officers and employees consistent with existing laws;
(h) To acquire, manage and hold such real and personal property as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of the Act;
(i) To invest funds and other assets in activities designed to promote the development of the film industry and the production of films;
(j) To ensure the establishment of a film archive for the preservation of film negatives and/or prints; and,
(k) To perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 6. *Composition of the Council.*

(a) Chairperson - The Chairperson, with the rank and salary of an Undersecretary, shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Council. He/she shall exercise administrative supervision to ensure the implementation of the policies of the Council and execute the functions provided under Section 9 of the Act . The Chairperson is appointed by the President for a term of three (3) years unless sooner removed by the President. He/she shall be eligible for reappointment but shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
(b) Regular Members (3) - There shall be three (3) regular members each representing respectively (i) legally constituted filmmakers association; (ii) legally constituted theater owners association; and, (iii) academe. They shall be appointed by the President for a term of three (3) years unless sooner removed by the President. They shall be eligible for reappointment but shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
(c) Ex - Officio Members (7) - There shall be seven (7) members sitting in an ex-officio capacity composed of the following: (i) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry or his/her duly designated representative; (ii) Secretary of the Department of Education or his/her duly designated representative; (iii) Chairperson of the Film Academy of the Philippines; (iv) President of the Cultural Center of the Philippines; (v) Commissioner/Head of the Committee on Cinema of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts; (vi) President of the League of City Mayors or his/her duly designated representative; and, (vii) Chairperson of the Metro-Manila Development Authority or his/her duly designated representative.

Section 7. *Succession to Vacant Position.* Any person who succeeds to a position left vacant by a member shall serve only for the unexpired portion of the vacated term. Service of the unexpired portion shall not be counted as a term.

Section 8. *Honoraria.* Each member of the Council or his / her duly designated representative shall receive an honorarium for each meeting actually attended, the amount of which will be determined by the Council based on government rules and regulations.

Article 4 - Secretariat

Section 9. *Executive Director.* The Chairperson shall be assisted by an Executive Director to be appointed by the Council upon recommendation of the Chairperson. His/her term of office shall be co-terminus with the Chairperson unless sooner removed for cause. He/She shall receive a salary comparable to that of equivalent rank under the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System.

Section 10. *Functions of the Executive Director.* The Executive Director shall head the Secretariat of the Council and exercise such duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chairperson.

Section 11. *Qualifications of the Executive Director.* The Executive Director shall have the qualifications of Director IV, with any college degree, and at least three (3) years of supervisory experience.

Section 12. *Support Staff.* The Secretariat shall have such operating units and personnel as the Council may find necessary for the proper performance of its functions.

Section 13. *Functions of the Secretariat.* The functions of the Secretariat shall include the following:

(a) To manage and administer the day-to-day operations of the Council under the supervision of the chairperson;
(b) To facilitate communications and linkages with the Cinema Evaluation Board and the different government offices, non-governmental agencies and the public, as well as with domestic and international film festivals and markets;
(c) To provide secretarial and record-keeping services to the Council; and
(d) To perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Council.

Article 5 - Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB)

Section 14. *Composition of the Board.*

(a) Chairperson - The Board shall have a Chairperson who shall serve for a term of two (2) years and shall be eligible for reappointment for a second term.
(b) *Film Industry Members (20)* - There shall be twenty (20) members of the Board who shall come from the film industry. These members shall serve for two (2) years and shall be eligible for reappointment for a second term.
(c) *Arts, Academe, Business and other Sectors (10)* - There shall be ten (10) members of the Board who shall come from the field of arts, the academe, business and such other sectors as the Council may choose or identify. These members shall serve for two (2) years and shall be eligible for reappointment for a second term.

Section 15. *Initial Appointments to the Board.* In the initial appointments, the Board Chairperson and the first fifteen (15) members shall hold office for two (2) years and the next fifteen (15) for one (1) year. The President shall appoint the members of the Board from among forty (40) nominees submitted by the Council.

Section 16. *Succession to Vacant Position.* Any person who succeeds to a position left vacant by a member shall serve only for the unexpired portion of the term, unless re-appointed. Service of the unexpired portion shall not be counted as a term. A successor shall be appointed from among the list of nominees recommended by the Council.

Section 17. *Vice-Chairperson.* The Council, upon recommendation of the Board Chairperson, shall designate a Board Vice-Chairperson from among the members of the Board.

Section 18. *Meetings.* The Board shall determine its own rules and procedures, including the regular date, time and venue of their meetings subject to the approval of the Council; provided, that the presence of the Chairperson or his/her duly designated representative who is also a Board member, and at least eleven (11) members, will suffice to constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business; Provided further, that the Board Chairperson will not vote unless to break a tie.

Section 19. *Specific Powers and Functions.* The Board shall undertake the following tasks:
(a) Evaluate and grade films submitted to the Council subject to Section 12 of the Act;
(b) Formulate and establish a set of standards and criteria and procedures for the Cinema Evaluation System primarily based on the categories enumerated in Section 11(a)-(h) of the Act, subject to the approval of the Council; and,
(c) Such other functions which the Council may assign from time to time.

Section 20. *Cinema Evaluation System.* The Cinema Evaluation System, subject to the approval of the Council, shall be based on but not limited to the following:

1. DIRECTION - effective, focused and insightful integration of the different cinematic arts and crafts involved in a production, utilizing the unique strengths of the medium to dynamically depict the film's meaning and intent.
2. SCREENPLAY - a detailed scenario containing dialogue, actions, and general atmosphere to be incorporated into the finished motion picture. A superior screenplay contains a blueprint in words of an intense and imaginative vision of the world.
3. CINEMATOGRAPHY - creative use of key elements of the film medium's visual language - lighting, composition, movement, camera techniques - to dynamically depict conflict, theme, story and character as they relate to the production's significant intent.
4. EDITING - the creative use of tempo, transitions, tonal changes and other editing techniques to provide the movie with the unique visual energy and style it needs to develop its plot and theme in cinematic terms.
5. PRODUCTION DESIGN - the effective, appropriate and imaginative representation of locale, period, atmosphere, costumes, make-up, hairstyles and props as they relate to character, story and style to actualize the film's significant objective.
6. MUSIC SCORE - the creative and appropriate use of music to enhance emotion, mood and atmosphere, help define character, and establish rhythm and pacing, in furtherance of the film's creative intent.
7. SOUND - the effective and creative interplay of dialogue, music, natural sound and recorded sound effects to give the film the aural values to generate audience empathy.
8. PERFORMANCE - the clear, honest and stylistically consistent depiction of character, emotion, motivation, and personal and societal relationships, resulting in the creation onscreen of people whom viewers can understand and empathize with.

Section 21. *Honoraria.* Each Board member shall receive an honorarium for each film actually evaluated, the amount of which shall be approved by the Council based on government rules and regulations.

Section 22. *Prohibition and Disqualification.* Every member of the Board shall conduct himself/herself with utmost honesty and integrity at all times. No member of the Board shall participate in the grading of a film in which he/she or any member of his/her family or any relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity shall have financial or any other interest in the subject film. Such member has the duty to disclose fully in writing, at the time of his/her inhibition, the nature of his/her interest, including actual or potential conflict of interest and the reasons for his/her inhibition. Failure to do so shall be subject to formal investigation without prejudice to sanction.

Article 6 - Application for Grading of Films

Section 23. *Pre-qualification Requirements for Feature Films.* Any feature film subject to grading must comply with the following:

(a) The film must be intended for theatrical and other forms of exhibition in the Philippines that will charge admission fees and are subject to amusement tax;
(b) The film must have a total running time of at least eighty (80) minutes;
(c) The premiere commercial screening of the film must be held in the Philippines;
(d) The film should not have had any previous commercial theatrical release, free television broadcast, cable broadcast or video release in any commercial medium anywhere in the world; provided, that films shown publicly in venues and theaters outside post-production laboratories, and whose premiere nights or advanced screenings like sneak previews / midnight screenings in commercial theaters are charging admission fees, shall not be qualified for application and grading; Provided further, that notwithstanding any previous release, the following films shall not be disqualified for application and grading: (i) those shown privately in venues and theaters extended for free use, (ii) special technical previews for investors and production people whose work is germane to the films, wherein admission is by invitation, and, (iii) screenings which have academic discussions or open fora.

Section 24. *Procedures for Grading.*

(a) The applicant producer or his/her duly authorized representative should fill-up an application form available at the Secretariat;
(b) The properly filled-up application form together with the required screening fee determined by the Council should be submitted to the CEB-FDCP at least seven (7) calendar days before its scheduled playdate;
(c) The film will be reviewed, evaluated and graded by the Board within five (5) working days after submission of the application and shall transmit its decision to the Council within twenty-four (24) hours from the rendering of the decision. The grading submitted by the Board en banc to the Council shall be final;
(d) The film subject of review should be submitted in its entirety by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the scheduled viewing;
(e) In the event the producer or his/her duly authorized representative fails to deliver the film on time for the scheduled review, the producer shall be liable for the expenses incurred related to the scheduled review, including the costs of food, venue and honoraria of authorized viewers;
(f) No producer and/or his/her duly authorized representative nor any member of the cast, staff or crew shall be allowed to stay inside the preview room/venue(s) during the screening and deliberations;
(g) No gifts from any party involved in the production will be accommodated or received;
(h) If any applicant producer or his/her duly authorized representative fails to submit a scheduled film for review for three (3) consecutive times, the Board will not entertain his/her future application for that particular film;
(i) The Council shall inform the applicant producer of the Board's decision not later than twenty-four (24) hours upon receipt thereof;
(j) The applicant producer will be furnished with the Board's decision and reviews, including a list of members present and the date, time and place of screening/grading;
(k) The Board and the Council shall not be allowed to cut, delete, shorten or modify in any manner films being graded by the Board, nor shall they be allowed to suggest cuts or deletions or any other form of modification to the film-makers and pre-requisites for earning the Board grading;
(l) The CEB-quality graded film, which is submitted to the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) for audience classification after the film has been graded by the CEB, and for which changes are done on the film (i.e. re-editing to shorten scenes, re-mixing, etc.) may require a resubmission of said film to the Board to ensure that the film maintains its "A" or "B" grading; Provided, that the resubmission only seeks to maintain its first grading subject to a fee determined by the Council. Provided, further, that members of the Board who will review the resubmitted film will be composed of members who voted and graded the film in its first review. Tampering with graded film will result in cancellation of tax rebate; and,
(m) Any action taken by the Board on the film submitted for evaluation and grading may be reconsidered upon motion to the Board en banc within twenty-four (24) hours from receipt of notice of said action, and the Board en banc shall render its decision within forty-eight (48) hours from its receipt of the motion for reconsideration. The Board en banc must be composed of at least majority of the members of the Board; Provided, that an action for reconsideration shall be limited only to upgrading from "B" to "A", subject to a fee determined by the Council.

Article 7 - Privileges of Graded Films

Section 25. *Privileges.* Films which have obtained an "A" or "B" grading from the Council pursuant to Sections 11 and 12 of this Act shall be entitled to the following privileges:

a. Amusement tax reward. - A grade "A" or "B" film shall entitle its producer to an incentive equivalent to the amusement tax imposed and collected on the graded films by cities and municipalities in Metro Manila and other highly urbanized and independent component cities in the Philippines pursuant to Sections 140 and 151 of Republic Act No. 7160 at the following rates:

1. For grade "A" films - One hundred percent (100%) of the amusement tax collected on such films; and,
2. For grade "B" films - Sixty-five percent (65%) of the amusement tax collected on such films. The remaining thirty-five (35%) shall accrue to the funds of the Council.

Article 8 - Amusement Tax Deductions and Remittances

Section 26. *Memorandum of Agreement.* The Council shall execute a Memorandum of Agreement with proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas in Metropolitan Manila and highly urbanized and independent component cities in the provinces as well as with movie producers on the system and procedures to follow in the collection, remittance and monitoring of the amusement tax collected on CEB-graded films. The Council will have the option to determine whether a general procedure/process shall be adopted by all proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas or an individualized system.

The Memorandum of Agreement shall also include arrangements on information sharing between and among the Council, the proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas and the movie producers on matters related to the CEB-graded film.

The mode of remitting the deducted amusement tax to the Council shall be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement. Such mode of payment may be through electronic transfer, fund-to-fund, or check payment.

The amusement tax collection, remittances and monitoring system shall be reviewed annually to improve the system.

Section 27. *Obligation to deduct and withhold.*

(a) All proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas where graded films are exhibited are hereby mandated to deduct and withhold the amusement tax on such graded film, which would otherwise accrue to the cities and municipalities within Metro Manila, and highly urbanized and independent component cities outside Metro Manila pursuant to Section 140 of the Local Government Code during the period the graded film is exhibited.

(b) All proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas where graded films will be exhibited shall notify in writing, by fax or e-mail, the concerned city or municipality of the scheduled exhibition of graded films and duration of the same. They shall likewise inform in writing the city or municipality concerned of the fact that the corresponding amount of amusement tax has been withheld and forwarded to the Council.

(c) Proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas who fail to notify the city or municipality concerned shall be required to pay the amusement tax in accordance with the local revenue ordinance of the local government unit concerned.

(d) Remittance to Council - The proprietors, operators or lessees shall remit the amusement tax so deducted and withheld to the Council within thirty (30) days from the termination of the exhibition

(e) Remittance to Producers - Within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof, the Council shall remit the corresponding amusement tax to the producers of the graded film, in accordance with Section 13(a) (i) and Section 13 (a) (2) of R.A. 9167 and Article 7 thereof.

(f) Effects of Failure to Remit - Proprietors, operators and lessees of theaters or cinemas who fail to remit the amusement tax proceeds within the prescribed period shall pay to the Council a surcharge equivalent to five percent (5%) of the amount due for each month of delinquency.

Article 9 - Enforcement Measures

Section 28. *Plenary Powers of the Council.* For purposes of implementing the provisions of Article 8 above and Section 14 of the Act, the Council may:

(1) Impose administrative fines and penalties of not more than One Hundred Thousand (P100,000.00) Pesos for the violation of any provision of the Act and/or these Implementing Rules and Regulations;
(2) Cause or initiate the criminal or administrative prosecution of violators thereof;
(3) Cause the closure of any theater or cinema that fails or unreasonably refuses to remit the tax collected on a graded film for a period not exceeding fifteen (15) days. After such period, the closure order shall automatically be lifted without prejudice to the right of the Council to cause or initiate criminal or administrative prosecution against the erring theater or cinema owners pursuant to paragraph 2, Section 15 of the Act and the rules implementing the same;
(4) Call upon representatives of the different governmental agencies and other various associations in the movie industry to help ensure compliance with the Act and these Rules;
(5) Deputize any law enforcement agency and instrumentality of the government for assistance in the implementation and enforcement of its functions and orders.
(6) To effectively cause or initiate criminal and/or administrative prosecution as above stipulated, the Council is hereby empowered to issue subpoena duces tecum and enlist the assistance of the Department of Justice or the Office of the Solicitor General, especially inter alia, for the issuance of subpoena ad testificandum and conducting the proper investigation of the violation and the subsequent prosecution therefor.
(7) For purposes of all the forgoing, the Council may constitute Local Regulatory Council or Councils in the cities and municipalities throughout the country. The local council or councils shall be composed of representatives from the government and from the private sector, who shall all serve without compensation and only for such period as the Chairperson of the Council shall determine.

Article 10 - Budget and Utilization of Funds

Section 29. *Fund Utilization.* The Council shall first deposit the collected amusement taxes and other fees and charges with the Bureau of the Treasury as Special Account in the General Fund (SAGF), which shall be treated as automatically appropriated. Availment of these collections from amusement taxes and other fees and charges shall be in accordance with existing budgeting, accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Article 11 - Authority to Accept Donations

Section 30 *Authority to Accept Donations.* The Council may accept donations, contributions, grants, bequests or gifts, in cash or in kind, from various sources, domestic or foreign, except from domestic movie producers and distributors, for purposes relevant to its functions.

Section 31. *Use of Cash Donations.* Cash donations shall not be used to fund the personal services requirements of the Council. However, cash donations may be used for project hires, which include such expenses as honoraria and other fees.

Article 12 - Annual Report

Section 32. *Annual Report.* The Council shall, within ninety (90) days after the end of every fiscal year, submit to the President and to Congress an annual report on its compliance with, or accomplishments under these Rules, together with its plans and recommendations to improve and develop its capability to enforce the provisions of these Rules, and a complete accounting of transactions with respect to any funds received under these Rules.

Article 13 - Final Provisions

Section 33. *Separability Clause.* If, for any reason, any provision of these Rules, or any part thereof, is declared invalid or unconstitutional, all other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Section 34. *Effectivity.* These Rules shall take effect fifteen (15) days after their publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation, except those, which pertain to self-executing provisions of these Rules.

Approved by the Film Development Council of the Philippines on September 05, 2003.

CERTIFIED BY:
MARIA FIBA C. YONZON
Board Secretary

NOTED BY:
LAURICE GULLEN-FELEO
Chairperson/Chief Executive Officer

APPROVED during the Board of Trustees meeting on September 5, 2003 at the FDCP office, 3F, Production Design Center Building, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City.

BIENVENIDO L. LUMBERA
Representative from the Academe

TERESITA T. SY-COSON
Representative from the legally constituted Theater Owners Association

FE A. HIDALGO
Representative, Department of Education

ROBERT C. NACIANCENO
Representative, Metro Manila Development Authority

ESPIRIDION D. LAXA
Chairperson, Film Academy of the Philippines

MARILOU DIAZ-ABAYA
Representative from the Filmmakers Association

MARY ANNE E. RAGANIT
Representative, Department of Trade and Industry

MARIA FIBA C. YONZON
Representative, National Commission for Culture & the Arts

NESTOR O. JARDIN
President, Cultural Center of the Philippines

GIL-FERNANDO Q. CRUZ
Representative, League of City Mayors

LAURICE GULLEN-FELEO
Chairperson

ADVT

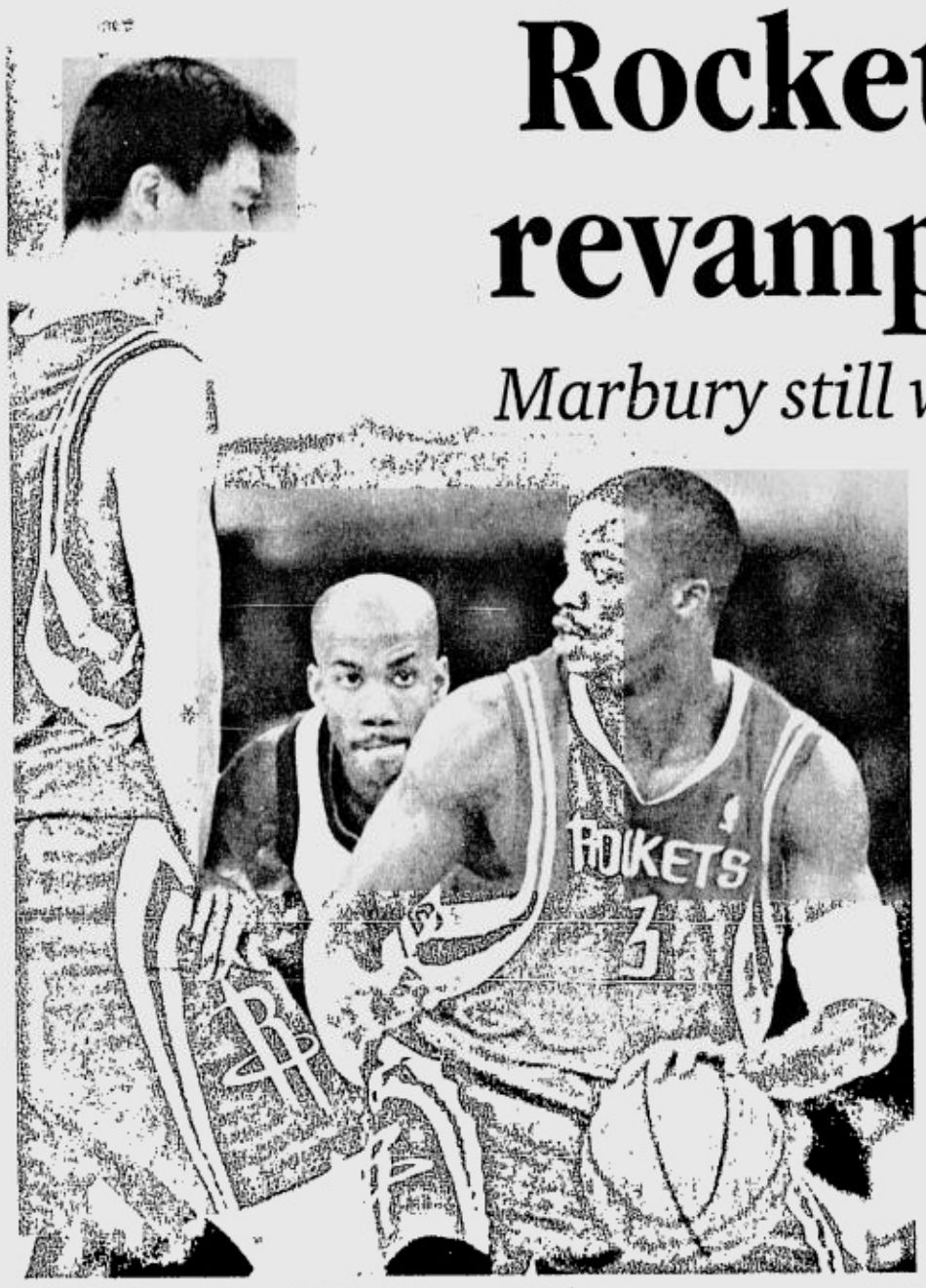
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2004

Rockets roll past revamped Knicks

Marbury still winless with new team



MARBURY (center) is sandwiched by Yao Ming and Francis. REUTERS

NEW YORK—In a game that turned into a blowout just moments after the opening tip, Jeff Van Gundy's Houston Rockets scored 23 of the game's first 25 points to humiliate the revamped New York Knicks, 111-79, Thursday.

The loss was the fourth in succession for the Knicks, their second straight since acquiring Stephen Marbury and Penny Hardaway in an eight-player trade with Phoenix.

"Awful, awful," said Knicks coach Don Chaney. "We played like strangers at both ends of the floor."

Marbury played poorly for the second straight game, scoring six points on 3-for-12 shooting. His lowlight came late in the third quarter when he went up softly on a two-on-one break and had his layup rejected on a spectacular leap by Steve Francis.

"I would never think it would happen this bad," Marbury said. "We cannot dwell on this. After a win, this all goes away."

Francis dominated the point guard matchup, scoring 25 points with five assists. Every Houston starter reached double figures, with Jim Jackson getting 21, Yao Ming scoring 15, Cuttino Mobley adding 14 and Kelvin Cato 10. The victory margin matched Houston's largest of the season.

Moochie Norris and Keith Van Horn had 17 points to lead the Knicks.

In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett had 26 points and 14 rebounds, and Latrell Sprewell scored 25 points to lead Minnesota over the travel weary Portland, 96-75.

Sam Cassell added 10 points and 11 assists for Minnesota, which has won 14 of 17 and seven straight at home.

Meanwhile, an exam on Shaquille O'Neal's strained right calf revealed no serious damage Thursday, but the Los Angeles Lakers star will miss at least two more games.

"The MRI confirmed a strained calf muscle and showed significant swelling, but no other damage," Lakers spokesman John Black said. *AP*

Embattled taekwondo chief quits

UN-YONG

SEOUL, South Korea—International Olympic Committee Vice President Kim Un-yong, humiliated by criminal allegations against him, resigned as national lawmaker and world taekwondo chief on Friday.

Kim has been investigated by South Korean prosecutors on allegations that he took kickbacks from former South Korean Olympic officials and embezzled funds from taekwondo organizations.

A grim-faced Kim called a news conference on Friday at the National Assembly and said he was quitting as head of the World Taekwondo Federation—a member of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations—which he has headed for three decades.

He also gave up two posts he held in South Korea: national lawmaker affiliated with the opposition Democratic Millennium Party, and head of the World Taekwondo Headquarters, a Seoul-based institute that issues taekwondo credentials.

"I made this decision while feeling a heavy sense of responsibility for causing controversy in connection with my sports diplomacy," said Kim, reading from a prepared statement.

Kim said he'd devoted his life to boosting the international status of South Korean sports, including the traditional martial art taekwondo. *AP*

Rusedski denies drug use

SYDNEY, Australia—Former US Open runner-up Greg Rusedski on Friday denied ever taking performance-enhancing drugs and said he'd continue playing tennis in Australia before facing a hearing next month.

Rusedski, who was born in Canada and plays for Britain, had earlier issued a statement saying he tested positive for nandrolone. He said the ATP told him a urine sample he provided showed a low concentration of nandrolone.

"I am innocent. I wish to make it clear that I do not and have never taken any performance enhancing drugs whatsoever or any drugs of any kind," Rusedski told APTN on Friday at a hotel in Adelaide.

"I expect to be found completely innocent of all charges and I just want to continue to enjoy my tennis and play my tennis in Australia, that's why I've decided to come down here and play because I know I'm innocent—that's all I have to say."

In his statement, Rusedski said "this is a very complex situation which, once understood, will clearly demonstrate my total innocence."

Rusedski, 30, will attend an anti-doping tribunal hearing on the case Feb. 9 in Montreal. He can compete until then, the ATP said. Rusedski faces a ban of up to two years if found guilty of a doping offense.

He flew into Sydney later Friday to prepare for next week's adidas International and avoided media after airport officials sent a car onto the tarmac to meet him.

Australian Open chief Paul McNamee said Rusedski would be welcome at the season's first major, starting Jan. 19 at Melbourne Park. *AP*

ASHLEY Harkleroad of the US celebrates winning her semifinal singles match against Marion Bartoli of France in the ASB Classic women's tennis tournament in Auckland, New Zealand Friday. Harkleroad advanced, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1. AFP

US, Slovak netters forge Hopman duel

PERTH, Australia—The defending champion Americans secured a berth in the Hopman Cup final just minutes before Australia withdrew Friday from the championship match at the international mixed team event because of Alicia Molik's foot injury.

The Slovak Republic, runner-up in Group B behind Australia, advanced into Saturday's final against the United States, said tournament director Paul McNamee.

The United States had needed only to win one match in the best-of-three Group A encounter against Russia on Friday to reach the final. Lindsay Davenport beat Anastasia Myskina, 6-4, 6-4, in the women's singles to give the Americans a 1-0 buffer and end Russia's hopes.

James Blake was playing Russian Marat Safin and the mixed doubles would be played later Friday.

Australia topped Group B but was in doubt for the final after Molik limped off while leading Slovakian Daniela Hantuchova by a set and 3-0 on Thursday night.

The 22-year-old Molik initially thought she'd recover in time to partner Australian teammate Lleyton Hewitt in the final, but MRI tests showed a tear in the tendons of her left foot.

A similar injury to her right foot ended Molik's 2003 season in October.

"I don't think I will be playing next week in Sydney, I will resume tournament play as soon as my foot is better," she said. *AP*

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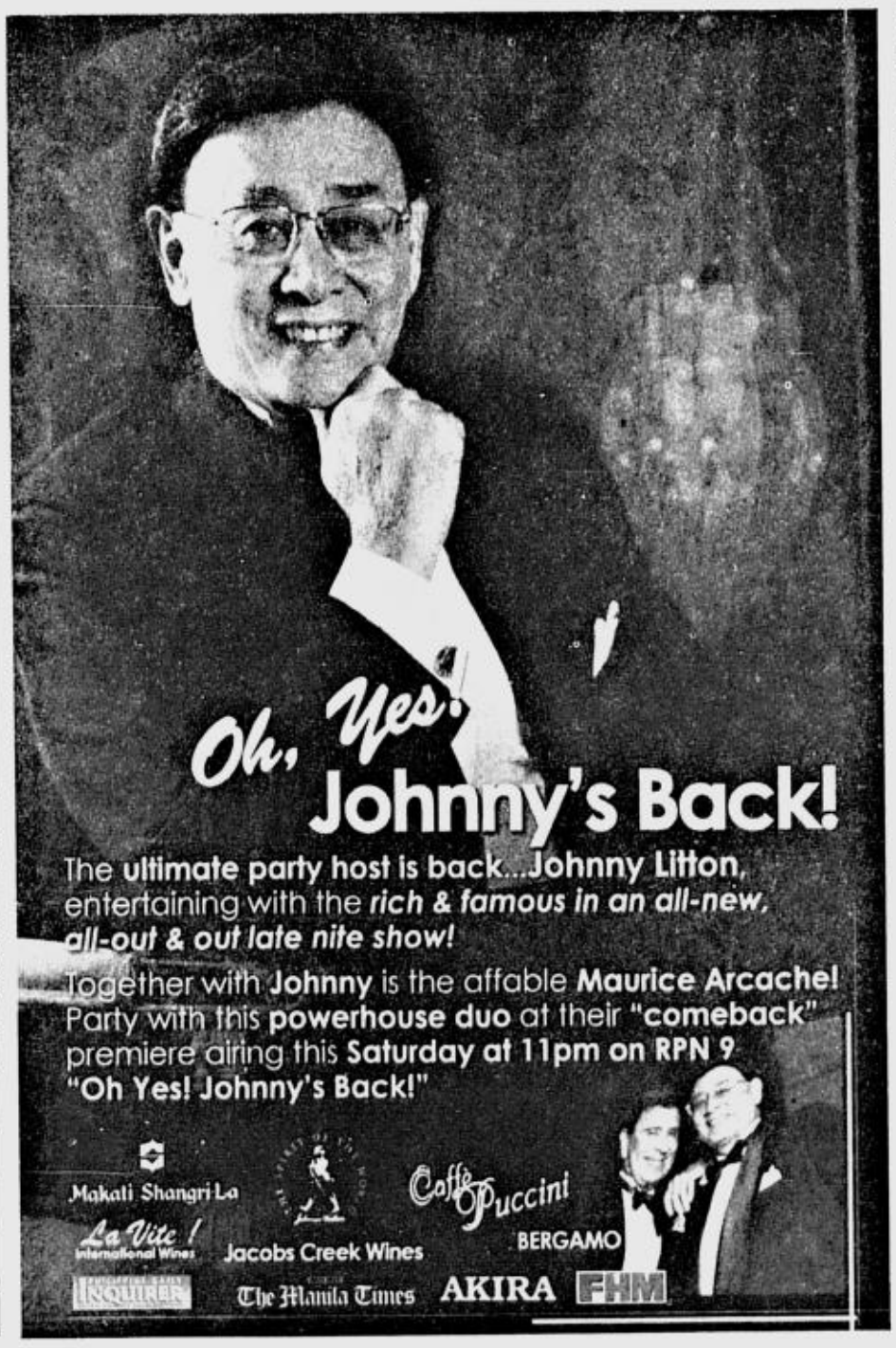

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

B1

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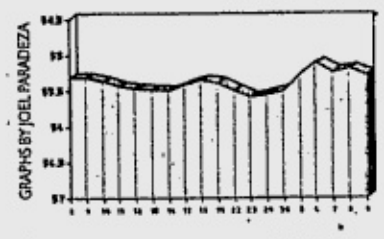
Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Assistant Editor **Corrie S. Narisma**

Gov't says high oil prices temporary

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱55.29 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Jan.9, 2004

¥107.04 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 9, 2004

GOLD: $421.30-421.80
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 9, 2004

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CURRENT uptrend in oil prices is only temporary and partly due the excessively high prices being maintained by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), the Department of Energy said yesterday.

At the same time, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. announced that 15 more gas stations would be offering discounts for transport groups.

"We believe that Opec's prices are hampering the sustainability of the economic recovery of oil-consuming countries like the Philippines while the world has begun to tolerate a price range of $22-28 per barrel," Perez said.

He said Dubai crude prices had hit $29 a barrel and it had been trading past the $28 level for 23 consecutive days.

Perez said Opec had disregarded its self-imposed rule that it should move to temper rising prices—by increasing production by 500,000 barrels a day—if prices broke the $28 level for more than 20 days.

"The Opec president has informed me that the group would wait until their next meeting to decide on whether to adjust production levels. However, this is scheduled in February," Perez said.

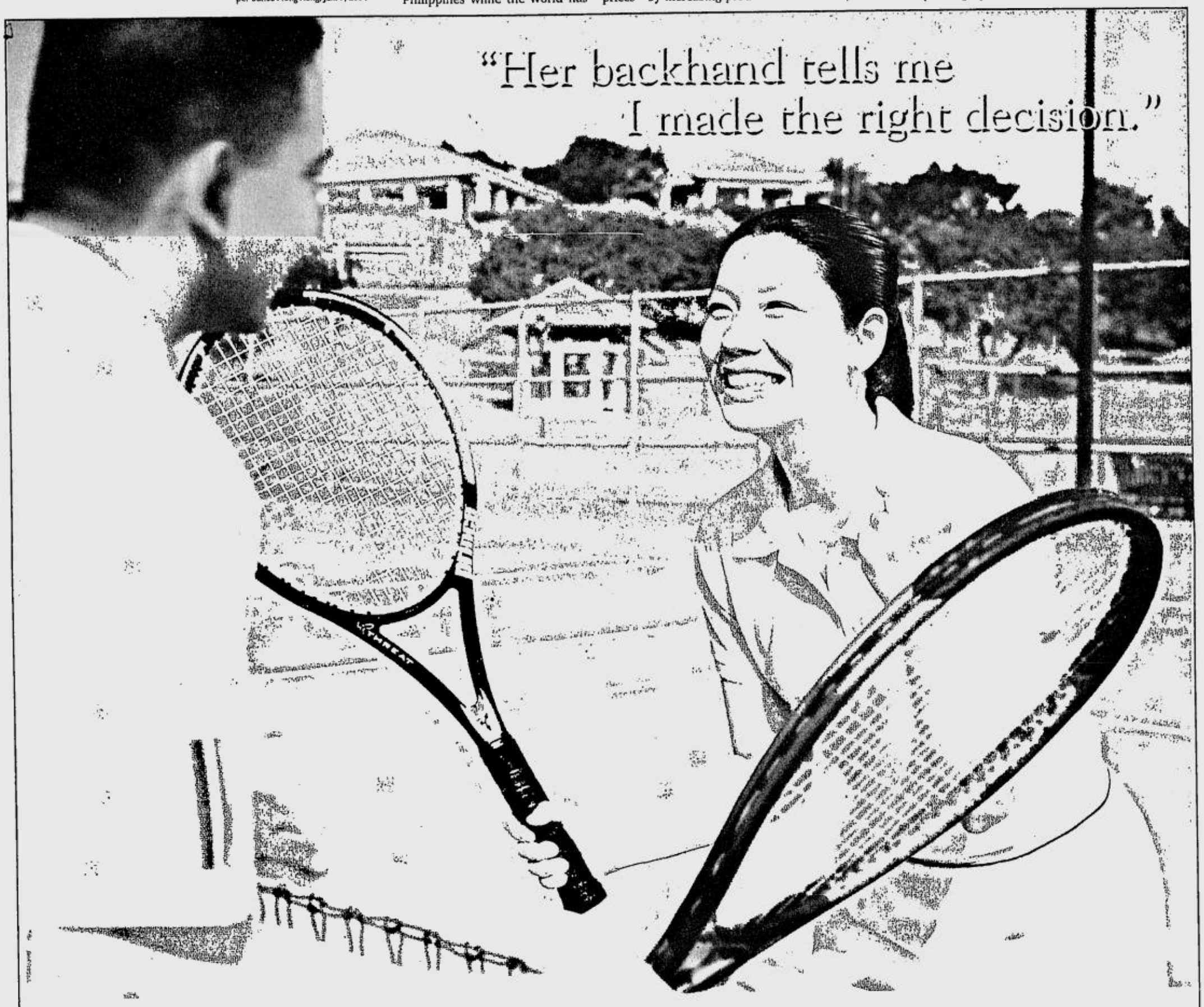
The energy chief appealed to Opec to follow its own rule. "Keeping prices above the $28 per barrel would eventually work against Opec."

He added that oil prices were temporary because of speculations in the world market; cold weather, with winter pushing up consumption levels in Europe and the United States, and fear of sabotage on oil infrastructure, like pipelines, in Iraq.

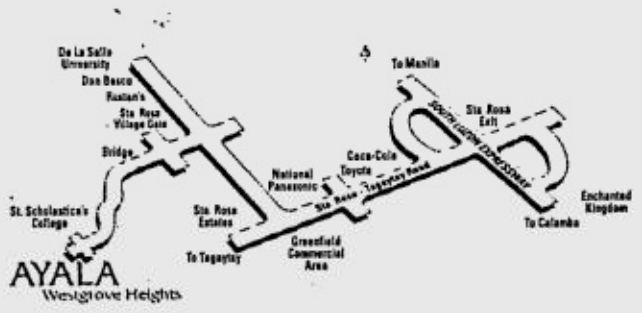
On the other hand, Perez said prices should go down in the second quarter due to increased production from non-Opec countries like Russia and Norway and Iraqi oil supply going back to the world market as a result of stabilizing situations in Iraq.

Meantime, the DOE said Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. was adding five filling stations to the list of those offering discounts to

HIGH/ B2



Weekends used to be the only time my wife and I can go out and do something together, enjoy each other's company in something as simple as a tennis game. We lived in the city -- there was simply not enough time and energy left after the traffic and the pollution and the stress. That's when I decided that my family deserves a better life. So we moved to Ayala Westgrove Heights. Sitting on 350 hectares of rolling hills and sun-kissed groves, Ayala Westgrove Heights is the Next Big Thing, after Makati and Ayala Alabang. Surrounded by the best schools and with complete recreational facilities, we never need to go far to spend quality time with each other. Now, watching my wife run towards me, hearing her laugh as she exhibits a greatly improved backhand for yet another love set on the tennis courts a few steps from our home, I know I made the right decision. - **Mr. and Mrs. Randy Aguirre**



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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

OH NO, not that punishment, not that horrible, horrifying, horrendous "postponement" technique, not even if it was just a warning!

We can take anything, even another boring Sona speech from Gloriaetta, in which she would describe how, in another life, she could be heaven's gift to our economy.

Sure, you can consider her that, but only if you look closely at her record using a nuclear microscope so powerful, it can detect the sex of microbes in your tonsils.

But, Bruce almighty, not this one! All of a sudden, they are moving heaven and earth, and the Supreme Court, because they want the elections ... well, POSTPONED!

***

LET us please just get over it already. There is no need to prolong our agony. This early, we are already at it again, slitting each other's throat.

And the reason is, for the sake of a couple of senatorial candidates who have brains the size of *mongo*, it is election time again.

That's why, even in the executive offices, everybody is staring at the ceiling. It seems nothing much is happening in business nowadays.

Everybody is on a wait-and-see mode. That is, WAIT for the elections, and SEE what monkey gets to the driver's seat in Malacañang.

***

AND everywhere you ask, whether in business or in karaoke bars, the most important item in the election agenda is ... well, cheating.

Word is going around that the administration is preparing to cheat the opposition, while the opposition is getting ready to cheat the administration.

In the end, it will turn out that the two camps are going to cheat nobody else but the people, *este*, each other *pala*.

Why do we even think cheating is possible? Simple, my Dimple, and it's because, in all the past elections, without any exception, we saw a lot of cheating.

***

BUT now they tell us that they are moving to postpone the elections, because they worry over some stylishly democratic s..t, the one called "frustrating the will of the electorate."

Oh yeah, since when? It's not as if we never really saw any cheating in the glorious history of our impoverished land. Come on. Here, cheating is the norm!

With or without anybody worrying about cheating, the show, *este*, the elections, must go on. This country cannot stand another day of the election jitters.

It has something to do with the economy. As I said, everything is on hold. New investments. Privatization. Your mother-in-law's diet. Everything. ON HOLD.

That's the only reason. It is not because some incumbent senators cannot wait to debate with the likes of Lito Lapid and Bong Revilla.

***

ALL this talk about cheating, actually, has something to do with a little pocket money. It belongs to the Comelec, amounting to some P1.3 billion.

The Comelec is spending that much for its so-called automated counting machines, or the ACMs, which can shorten the counting to 24 hours, max.

It so happens that the Comelec awarded the contract to a consortium called the Mega Pacific, and not to the group of the guys behind all this noise about cheating.

Come to think of it, it was only after the Comelec awarded the contract to Mega Pacific, that all this noise started, which could even lead to the postponement of the elections. Nice!

***

BEFORE our most respectable Supreme Court, anyway, is a case involving some groups that asked the Comelec to take back the ACM contract from Mega Pacific.

It does not matter that some of those who filed the case attended the media conference, the one called for by the losing bidder, which was held apparently to attack the Comelec, and held right after the Comelec declared it as "loser."

The thing is, the case before the Supreme Court can delay the elections. Even if the Supreme Court rules in favor of the Comelec, the losing bidd...*este*, the petitioners *pala*, can still delay the whole thing by filing Sa motion for reconsideration.

To think, the noisy groups have nothing to do with the losing bidder. Honest. They are only trying to mess with the elections for the good of the country, I swear.

***

IT seems their main objection to the contract award to Mega Pacific involves what, to them, is a big issue of mistaken identity by the Comelec.

It seems the noise makers claimed that the Comelec awarded the contract to a firm called Mega Pacific eSolutions.

But then, as they saw it, the company was not the only one which did the work, because it was done by a consortium called—charaaan—Mega Pacific also.

The noise makers insisted that the Comelec only qualified Mega Pacific eSolutions to bid for the contract, but not the "consortium" called Mega Pacific. Get it?

***

ALRIGHT, they lost me, too, but using my immense singing talent in karaoke bars, I have to say that Mega Pacific eSolutions only made the room reservation.

It went for the contract, precisely, because it already had an agreement with the other members of the consortium to take part in the project.

The others were actually the IT biggies, such as SK C & C Co. Ltd. of South Korea, We-Solv Open Computing, Election.com Ltd. and ePLDT.

Like in a karaoke bar outing, Mega Pacific eSolutions reserved the room, and the others did the singing, including the back-up vocals, with myself on imaginary drums.

***

ANYWAY, amid all the hair-splitting about how, technically, Mega Pacific consortium is not the same as Mega Pacific eSolutions, we are told that the elections may be delayed.

And that is sad. No, not sad, it is stupid. You see, under the contract, the Comelec must get about 2,000 ACMs for the forthcoming elections.

These were already delivered to the Comelec. In other words, for the first time ever, the Comelec is ready to deliver the election results in 24 hours.

And yet the Comelec must contend with this messy thing which, really, in all honesty and candor, had nothing to do with the losing bidder.

***

LOOK, as I said, ever since the Comelec awarded the contract, meaning, somebody else lost in the bidding, it has gotten all sorts of flak.

I know because, whether or not it was intended to be that way, the rumors reached me, too, right after the awarding.

When that did not work, the noise veered towards "the possibility of cheating." I say that somebody was really out to disrupt the process.

Now, even if the elections bring out the worst in us, we still need them. It's not even all about some lofty ideals about the exercise of democratic process.

Elections do make us unruly, sure, but at least by holding them as scheduled, we earn the confidence of the world.

***

AND that's the only thing, that confidence, that keeps bringing in the money from abroad to keep from us from going under.

Even if we love to show the world that we cannot agree on what color of political underpants to wear, at least we can assure it of a peaceful change of administrations. Elections are always a gain to us. Delay them, you delay the ... (see above title)!

Still, as if to negate all that, some noisy groups are pointing out every kind of apparent, unproven flaw in the Comelec automation program, claiming the possibility of massive cheating, which is hard to detect, because it is hi-tech cheating. Enough already!

The Comelec is holding mock elections. It's the chance for all those hacking bigshots to prove their claim that they can fool around with the ACMs. So let's see them do it!

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 9, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	11,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	18	18	17.75	17.75	23,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49	50.5	49	50	1,200,600
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	4,110
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	39.5	38	38	385,300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.53	730,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28.5	27	28	1,605,300
Philippine National Bank	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	92,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	26,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	4,300
Security Bank Corp.	17	17	17	17	9,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	2,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1800	1800	1800	1800	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	850,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	199	199	199	199	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1395	1405	1395	1405	2,130
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26.5	97,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.72	0.76	0.72	0.73	10,820,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	980	990	960	980	151,260
Ipeople Inc.	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	667,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	300,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.97	1.06	0.97	1.06	24,270,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.18	0.22	0.18	0.22	400,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	975	1010	970	995	432,730
Ivantage Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	140,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	20,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.5	18.5	17.5	18.5	1,260,200
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	32	29	31.5	5,820,500
Petron Corp.	2.36	2.4	2.34	2.36	7,454,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	150,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	758,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	660,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	150,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	770,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31	31	65,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.5	20.75	20	20.25	806,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	110,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55.5	54.5	55	157,500
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	66	65.5	66	690,000
Universal Robina Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	10,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	4,570,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,000
Ayala Corp.	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.8	10,005,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.5	3.75	3.5	3.7	5,168,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	10,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	30,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.57	0.62	0.57	0.61	31,040,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	60,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	400,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.044	0.044	0.043	0.043	2,500,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,050,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	20.75	21.75	20.75	21.5	1,020,400
Ionics Inc.	1.48	1.6	1.48	1.6	817,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	215,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	6,065,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	9,800,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	1,500,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	20,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	50,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	37,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	7.2	7.2	7	7	16,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.55	3,300,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	230,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
Prenwere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25.5	26	25	26	1,820,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.3	20,217,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	120,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	50,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.17	0.17	450,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	550,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.215	1,660,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.06	9,501,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	490,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	90,000
Primex Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	40,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.5	27,772,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	6,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.23	2,600,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	4,590,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	9,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.008	58,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	12,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.43	400,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.45	1,780,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	500,000
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.0028	0.0028	42,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	70,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	60,000

Finance dep't to borrow $200M this month to pay maturing debts

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is set to borrow another $200 million this month to pay obligations maturing in February.

The DoF has already asked a number of banks to submit underwriting offers for the short-term facility that will mature in one to three years.

"It could be a bond or a loan depending on the proposals we get," said National Treasurer Sergio Edeza.

Proceeds from the borrowing would be used to pay the government's debt to HSBC Corp. which bought $200 million worth of one-year zero coupon bonds in February last year.

Edeza added that there were plans to go back to the global bond market as the government has accumulated enough funds to cover obligations maturing in the first half.

He, however, said earlier that the national government could sell part of its $1 billion in National Power Corp. bond holdings this year instead of tapping the global bond market for fresh funds.

The DOF sold $100 million worth of Napocor bonds in December last year.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the DOF plans to unload more Napocor bonds in the coming months to fill up the government coffers.

Meanwhile, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved in principle Napocor's plan to borrow some $500 million.

ING Barings was tapped to underwrite the proposed bond or loan.

The Napocor has to raise between $1.2 billion and $2 billion this year to settle its dollar-denominated borrowings and finance capital expenditures.

In 2003, the government issued $500 million in 10-year global bonds. Half of the proceeds were borrowed by the ailing firm.

The national government is likely to end up raising most of Napocor's financing requirements due to the power firm's difficulty in getting fresh funds.

High oil prices . . .

From page B1

transport groups.

Petron Corp. was adding eight while Caltex had committed two more stations that peg diesel prices at P15.50 a liter compared to the retail price of as much as P17 a liter.

These make a total of 104 stations representing a fifth of all filling stations in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

On Thursday, the Consumer and Oil Price Watch said an average price increase of 80 centavos per liter for gasoline, diesel and kerosene was expected within the month.

DISCLOSURES

CAYETANO Paderanga Jr. resigned as director of **Bank of the Philippine Islands** after being elected president of the Philippine Stock Exchange.

***

GABRIEL Singson was appointed director of **Digital Telecommunications Inc.** while James Go was appointed vice chair.

***

CITYSTATE Savings Bank Inc.'s 33 million common shares that were locked-up under an escrow agreement last November 2001 can now be traded.

***

SPI Technologies Inc. bought 15,000 of its own shares at an average price of P13 per share. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PLDT set to sign rate deal with AT&T

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. expects to sign a termination rate agreement with American telecommunications giant AT&T Corp. in the next few days, leading to the resolution of a long-standing rates dispute between the two carriers.

A person familiar with the matter revealed that talks between the two telecommunications firms continued to progress and that an accord would be signed soon.

The two firms had been at odds with each other since February last year, following the Philippine carriers' decision to raise termination rates to 12 US cents per minute from 8 US cents for landline calls and to 16 US cents per minute from 12 US cents for mobile phone calls.

Termination rates refer to charges that an originating carrier pays for the completion of its subscribers' calls to a foreign carrier's network.

AT&T and another American carrier, MCI International, vehemently opposed the local carriers' decision to jack up these charges, to the point of filing a case against six Philippine companies with the US Federal Communications Commission.

The two American carriers accused PLDT and other local carriers Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., Digital Telecommunications Phil. Inc., Bayan Telecommunications Inc., and Subic Telecom of whipsawing, or pitting US carriers against each other to get better deals.

The FCC's International Bureau ruled in favor of US carriers by issuing a stop-payment order against Philippine carriers on March 10.

PLDT, Meralco lead stocks to 2-yr high

STOCKS rebounded to a two-year high yesterday, powered by telecom leader PLDT and dominant electricity retailer Meralco.

Analysts said buying was especially strong in telecom, retail, and food and beverage issues expected to benefit from traditional election campaign spending ahead of May 10 polls.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the session's most active stock, closed P45 or 4.74 percent higher at P995.

"B" shares in Manila Electric Co. (Meralco-B), which are open to foreigners, jumped 10.53 percent or P3 to P31.50. Its "A" shares, restricted to Filipinos, rose 5.71 percent or P1 to P18.50.

SM Prime Holdings Inc., the country's leading mall developer, rose 1.56 percent or 10 centavos to P6.50.

But analysts said the market might wane next week given a lack of fresh buying incentives and its recent strong rally.

"Maybe this is the last hurrah before another consolidation. It is hard to sustain such momentum we've been seeing this week," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

The main index rose 2.23 percent or 33.37 points to 1,528.87 points, the highest since March 12, 2001.

Value turnover surged to P1.54 billion from Thursday's P779.37 million. Gainers beat losers 38 to 28 and there were 36 stocks unchanged.

Despite ending 2003 with a budget deficit 2 percent lower than the target of P202 billion, analysts said the country's fiscal problems might temper the market's rise ahead of the elections.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday a widely expected downgrade of the Philippines by international ratings agency Moody's was not certain given its sound economy.

Moody's is expected to announce the result of its review later this month. *Reuters*

CURRENCIES

January 9, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.783392	1.000000	55.233000
Japan	Yen	0.007380	0.009420	0.520300
United Kingdom	Pound	1.436506	1.833700	101.280800
Hongkong	Dollar	0.100915	0.128818	7.115000
Switzerland	Franc	0.638513	0.815062	45.018300
Canada	Dollar	0.612599	0.781983	43.191300
Singapore	Dollar	0.462315	0.590145	32.595500
Australia	Dollar	0.606575	0.774293	42.766500
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.078018	2.652590	146.510500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208899	0.266660	14.728400
Brunei	Dollar	0.460954	0.588408	32.499500
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000094	0.000120	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.020123	0.025687	1.418800
UAE	Dirham	0.213289	0.272264	15.038000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.276500	70.504900
Argentina	Peso	0.271539	0.346620	19.144900
Brazil	Real	0.275068	0.351124	19.393600
Denmark	Kroner	0.134258	0.171380	9.465800
India	Rupee	0.017236	0.022002	1.215200
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.206183	0.263193	14.536900
Mexico	New Peso	0.072103	0.092039	5.083600
New Zealand	Dollar	0.528640	0.674809	37.271700
Norway	Kroner	0.115680	0.147665	8.156000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013624	0.017391	0.960600
South Africa	Rand	0.117980	0.150602	8.318200
Korea	Won	0.000663	0.000846	0.046700
Sweden	Kroner	0.109950	0.140351	7.752000
Syria	Pound	0.017704	0.022599	1.248200
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023246	0.029674	1.639000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000491	0.000627	0.034600

RP bonds pressured by downgrade report

HONG KONG—Philippine dollar bond spreads widened yesterday following a newspaper report that international ratings agency Moody's was considering downgrading the country's debt rating by up to two notches.

A newspaper report quoted an unnamed government official as saying that Moody's Investors Service was considering the downgrade, but BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura later told Reuters the move was not inevitable.

Markets are generally expecting a one-notch drop after Moody's cut its outlook on Philippine long-term foreign currency borrowings to negative from stable in September, but Buenaventura yesterday said the economy was in a sound condition.

"I think it is premature to report at this point as to whether we will be downgraded, if at all," the governor said.

"The economy is looking good and I think we are meeting all our targets." Traders said the newspaper report had triggered an early sell-off.

"At one point during the day the '25s were down by one point and the intermediate issues were down about half a point," said a dollar bond trader in Manila. *Reuters*

FCDU deposits hit $13.07B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANKING system's dollar deposits stood at $13.066 billion in December, up by about $200 million from the year-ago level and slightly higher than the $12.978 billion in November, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

"The steady growth of the foreign currency deposit unit or FCDU level of banks reflects the confidence of the depositors in the banking system," according to BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes.

The central bank values a stable FCDU deposit level because it complements the country's external reserves, which stood at $16.815 billion as of end-2003.

The gross international reserves and the FCDUs are the country's main line of defense against problems related to external payments and foreign exchange volatility.

Reyes said the increase in FCDUs in December, particularly during the holidays, came from the deposits of overseas Filipino workers and their families. Eight million Filipinos overseas were estimated to have brought $7.6 billion into the country last year.

The central bank has continued monitoring the FCDU levels of banks to ensure that this facility is not being used by currency speculators.

Last year, the central bank was alerted to local investors' practice of buying dollars from the spot market for temporary placement in their dollar accounts or FCDUs, only to be withdrawn later to buy dollar-denominated sovereign debt papers.

Thus, in September, the policy-making Monetary Board issued a circular prohibiting local investors from buying dollars from the spot market and using the amount to invest in Republic of the Philippines or ROP bonds.

Reyes, however, said the central bank did not see any irregularity in December.

The law provides foreign currency deposit units absolute secrecy.

As of end-2002, the banks' dollar deposits stood at $12.86 billion or 1.3 percent lower than $13.027 billion in the previous year.

The FCDU deposits represent the bulk of the banks' dollar assets that reached $16.622 billion as of end-2002, 4.9 percent higher than $15.489 billion in 2001.

Banks started operating separate dollar deposit units in 1983, with a seed fund of only $600 million.

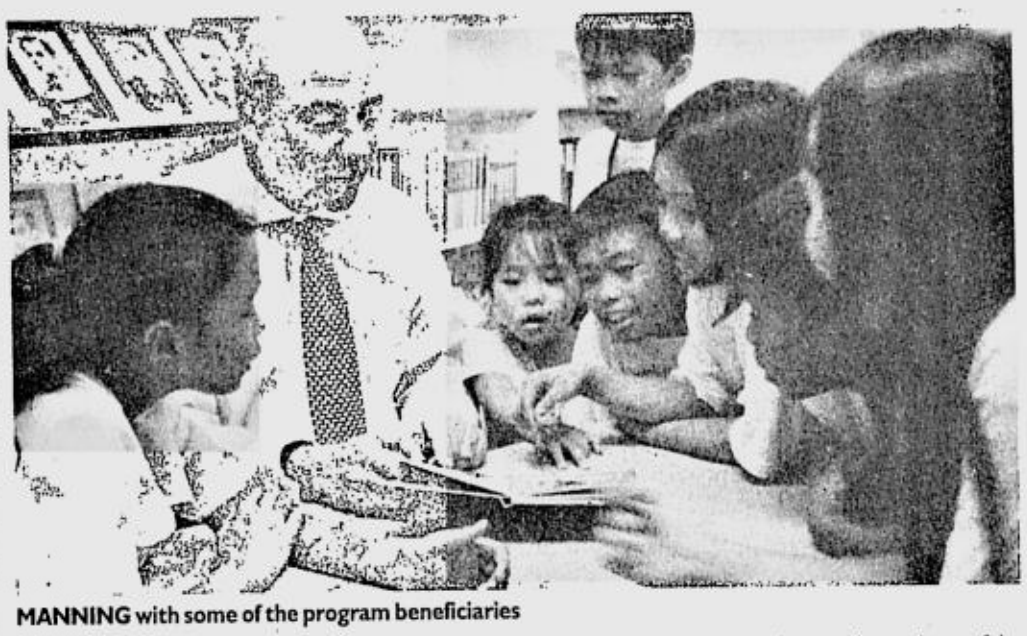
HSBC helps develop kids' reading habits

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

COMPANIES like the HSBC Group that invest in various countries for the long-term choose social projects with an eye on building a brighter future for their host countries.

In the Philippines, the HSBC group has come up with such a project called the READathon. It is a novel education program done in partnership with the Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation, which hopes to encourage primary schoolchildren to read, thus, enhance their skills in other subjects such as Math and Science.

"We believe that reading is the first step to empowering schools to excel and an empowered school is a result of many factors. HSBC works to provide innovative learning centers. We work to ensure that programs are in place to maximize the use of these facilities. We work to train teachers become more effective, and principals to become better managers. And we work to involve parents in the process," said HSBC CEO Warner Manning.



MANNING with some of the program beneficiaries

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Reading habit

Under the program, launched in four public elementary schools in December last year, HSBC will finance a 31-day "readathon" designed to develop the habit of reading among Grade IV students.

This is based on the belief that a habit is developed if an activity is done continuously for at least 31 days. With this program, students get access to brand new, locally published children's storybooks chosen for the values they impart.

Students are provided one hour of daily reading time and are asked to complete a "passport" that will show how many books they have read and to measure their comprehension and reading abilities.

HSBC commits to build HSBC READiscovery Centers in each of the schools to sustain the program goals and provide a haven for children to enjoy reading, enhance learning and explore the world through books, videos, audio CDs and games.

Readers' haven

Each READiscovery Center has individual reading areas as well as play areas for storytelling sessions and other creative activities. The center is equipped with audio-visual facilities including a TV set for group viewing, VHS and DVD players as well as listening stations for read-along sessions.

Each center has at least one computer, depending on student population, to run various interactive learning CDs. Mobile carts carry featured books, stuffed animals and games.

The program also includes a two-month training program for librarians at the Children's Learning and Resource Centers of the International School Manila and Xavier Grade School.

HSBC assistant vice president Laine Laudico-Santana said in an interview that HSBC had decided to focus on reading because the bank believes that it was the first step to acquiring knowledge.

"We are focusing on primary education because we believe it is the foundation of education. We, at HSBC, want to help build a stronger foundation among the children," Santana said.

"Many are focusing on high school and college education programs but the problem really stems from the lack of quality primary education. This is one reason why there is a big disparity between the knowledge of students in public schools and those in private schools. With adequate education, students in public schools will be at par with their counterparts in private schools," she added.

Santana said HSBC was encouraged by the initial impact of READathon on the students of the four schools initially covered—Libis Elementary School (Quezon City), Marcela Agoncillo Elementary School (Binondo, Manila), Alabang Elementary School (Muntinlupa) and Kalawaan Elementary School (Pasig).

Impact on students

"The students really took to the library and they were very excited about it. What is good about the program is that the schools have opened up the libraries not only to the students in other grades but also to the students from other schools in the community," she said.

The Philippines is the first to implement the READathon program and it is likely that HSBC in other countries would adopt a similar program to help underprivileged elementary schoolchildren.

The READathon is part of HSBC's "Empowering Schools to Excel" program.

"We are in the country for the long-term, so we need to invest in people," Santana said.

'Ginebra' is public domain, says TDI

INSISTING that generic words like "ginebra" are public domain, lawyers for Ginebra Kapitan told the Court of Appeals that Tanduay Distillers Inc. and other local companies have the right to use the name to describe their respective gin products.

The lawyers said there could neither be a trademark infringement nor unfair competition over the use of a generic, non-registrable mark.

They also asked the appellate court to prohibit Judge Edwin Sorongon of the Mandaluyong Regional Trial Court from hearing the case filed by Ginebra San Miguel Inc. (GSMI) against TDI until the CA's final disposition of the case. It claimed the judge had shown bias in favor of GSMI.

During oral arguments at the CA's second division Tuesday, Ginebra Kapitan counsel Eduardo R. Ceniza said that "to grant GSMI exclusive use of the word 'ginebra' was to grant San Miguel a monopoly over a term in the public domain, thus destroying competition which is contrary to public policy."

"Infringement of a generic word is a contradiction, since there can be no infringement of something that is free for all to use," Ceniza stressed.

The Ginebra Kapitan counsel also argued that GSMI did not have the exclusive right to use a clear glass bottle with a round shape since these were functional bottle features available to anyone

Ceniza said there was established jurisprudence that no one has a monopoly on the color, shape or size of containers, in referring to the round, clear glass "flint" bottle used by most gin makers in the Philippines.

Aside from GSMI and Tanduay, he said there are other local companies with their own ginebra brands.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE U.K.
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week January 6, 2004	Last Pricing Date December 23, 2003
Bond Fund - Peso	1.12089	1.11505
Managed Fund - Peso	1.17948	1.15708
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0100	0.9947

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

Smuggling and elections in the Philippines

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

(Second of two parts)

THE SECOND indication of the government's withdrawal from supporting the farmers is the blatant disregard of the proper procedures for allowing carrots from China to come in. There are nine steps that must be completed for the Pest Risk Analysis necessary to safeguard consumer health and our agricultural crops that might be contaminated by these pests. Only the fist step was completed.

COMMENTARY

Violation of procedures

Despite this, on June 20, 2003, Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI) Director Blo Adiong issued an official memorandum to "All Plant Quarantine Stations" and "All Stakeholders" allowing the importation of Chinese ginger, potato and carrots. Obviously, the vegetable farmers are important stakeholders in this matter. Yet they were never sent a copy of this memo. Once again, they were ignored.

Harm done

Finally, on Nov. 28 or more than five months after the June 29 memo, importers were told verbally that since the Pest Risk Analysis had not been completed, they would have to stop issuing import permits. Written confirmation of this announcement came later on Dec. 12. By that time, considerable suffering and much harm had been done to the farmers.

The harm continues to this day because of two reasons. Firstly, importers can argue that their import permits have a validity of three months, and can claim ignorance regarding the new ruling. Secondly, it is hard to distinguish which Chinese carrots in the market today arrived under those import permits and which are smuggled.

Conclusion

The Cordillera farmers' dream of farmer empowerment which was helped significantly by the government was similarly shattered by government. Some have resigned from the farmer organizations and are being actively courted to engage in violence by subversive elements. Throughout this, the specter of greedy politicians wanting easy money for their elections through smuggling at the expense of the poor farmers looms large on the horizon. The government can still do something about this if they only listen to the farmers. And they should punish the guilty parties within their ranks, as they used to do before.

The farmers believe it is about time that smuggling cease to be the cash cow in aid of some unscrupulous politicians' elections. Smuggling should instead be the cause of their downfall. Considering the harm they have done to the farmers, the bigger and more painful their downfall, the better. The farmers say they will try to make sure this happens, both during elections and beyond.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for presidential flagship programs and projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatch-phil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635.).

Probe of certain agri officials sought

By Christine A. Gaylican

VEGETABLE growers from Benguet have demanded an official investigation of agriculture officials who have allowed the importation of vegetables from China without the necessary pest risk analysis.

This, they said, was tantamount to economic sabotage because the move had exposed local consumers to health risks.

Alfredo Alingdeo, chair of the Benguet Vegetable Farmer and Distributor Cooperatives, said in a press conference yesterday that a formal investigation of former Bureau of Plant Industry Director Blo Umpar Adiong and other concerned officials of the Department of Agriculture should be pursued.

"It (Bureau of Plant Industry) conducted an initial pest risk analysis but reports showed that it was still incomplete. There was no proof that the vegetables (imported from China) were safe," said Alingdeo.

Alingdeo also said that the importation of cheap carrots from China jeopardized the local farmers' livelihood as prices of the vegetable dropped to P5 per kilo from P20.

"We have pointed this out to (Agriculture) Secretary (Luis) Lorenzo as early as August, but importation was suspended only in December," said Alingdeo.

Between August and December, hotels and restaurants were able to import close to 1.26 metric tons of carrots, displacing the produce of some 80,000 carrot farmers in Benguet, said farmer Edson Simeon.

"What took them so long to issue an order suspending the importation?" asked former Agriculture Undersecretary Ernesto Ordoñez, who now heads think tank Agriwatch.

Ordoñez said Adiong and other agriculture officials should be made answerable to this anomaly.

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE AND JUNK ITEMS

AS IS, WHERE IS BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING January 27, 28 and 29, 2004, 2:00 PM

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following junk and unserviceable items:

SCHEDULE – I: January 27, 2004, 2:00 PM, MMD Bidding Room, Bldg-1, NPC-HO, Diliman, QC

Item No.	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
1	One (1) lot scrap metals consisting of s/s equipment, valves, radiators, bushings, coils, boiler tubes, pulleys, breaker mechanisms, cylinder blocks heater elements, deep well pumps, electrical panels, lifting beams, crane extension jig, three (3) crates of assorted automotive and plant parts and other scrap items located at Bataan TPP, Limay Bataan	P 575,500.00/lot
2	One (1) lot condenser tubes, various sizes and lengths, copper-nickel and aluminum brass, 6,096 pcs located at Bataan TPP, Limay, Bataan	P 2,131,500.00/lot
3	One (1) unit junk and unserviceable, FMC crane, 50-tonner located at Bataan TPP, Limay, Bataan	P 660,000.00/lot
4.	One (1) lot unserviceable conveyor belt, steel and nylon belted, various length located at Masinloc CFTPP, Masinloc, Zambales	P 247,000.00/lot
* 5.	Waste lube oil, approximately 300 drums, located at Masinloc CFTPP	P 400.00/drum
* 6	Sludge oil, Bunker-C, approximately 70 drums, located at Masinloc, CFTPP (Drums are not included in item nos. 5 and 6)	P 200.00/drum

* DENR permit is required for participating bidders

SCHEDULE – II: January 28, 2004, 2:00 PM, MMD Bidding Room, Bldg-1, NPC-HO, Diliman, QC

Item No.	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
1.	One (1) lot of scrap metals and junk items consisting of KIA Ceres Van, KIA pick-up, Mazda pick-up, Mazda van, Nissan pick-up, Anshan Bus, Toyota Corona and Tamaraw, pipes, steel plates, drums, gas compressors, Ebara pumps, Mc Quay Water Chillers, steam oil tanks, induction motors, automotive batteries-63 pcs., photo copier-1 unit, used tires-144 pcs. and other junk items located at Palimpinon GPP 1 & 2	P 642,580.00/lot
* 2.	Waste oil, approximately 300 drums located at Palimpinon GPP 1 & 2, (drums are not included)	P 262.50/drum
3	One (1) lot scrap metals and copper located at Malaya TPP tank farm and warehouse, Pililla, Rizal	P 143,000.00/lot
4.	One (1) lot of scrap metals consisting of black pipes, unserviceable current transformer, cooling tower parts, channels, power cables and other scrap items located within the barricaded area of Mak-Ban GPP, Plant C and Plant Nursery, Bo. Bitin, Bay, Laguna	P 1,219,500.00/lot
5.	Barite, approximately 4, 114 bags, 100 lbs/bags, located at Mak-Ban GPP, Bo. Bitin, Bay Laguna	P 326.00/bag
6.	One (1) lot splatter board made of plastics, approximately 10,000 kgs located at Mak-Ban GPP, Bo. Bitin, Bay, Laguna	P 2.00/kg

* DENR permit is required for participating bidders

SCHEDULE – III: January 29, 2004, 2:00 PM, MMD Bidding Room, Bldg-1, NPC-HO, (Re-bidding)

Item No.	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
1	One (1) unit unserviceable, retired, cannibalized power transformer w/ out oil and 13 segments of used stator coils located at Sucat Thermal Power Plants, Muntinlupa City	P 650,000.00/lot
2.	One (1) unit unserviceable, retired and cannibalized electric generating set "CKD" Brand, 448 KW rating, Unit No. 5 of Bantayan DPP, Bantayan, Cebu	P 472,000.00
3.	One (1) lot unserviceable, retired and junk stationary equipment consisting of 25 units and 2 units heavy equipment of 25 units and 2 units heavy equipment located at Bulalo 30 PGI Stockyard Mak-Ban, GPP, Bo. Bitin, Bay Laguna	P 730,000.00/lot
* 4.	One (1) lot of sludge oil consisting of residual fuel, sediments and water, approximately 67,557 liters, contained in drums and Fuel oil tank no. 7 located at Bataan TPP, Limay, Bataan (Sale is on Clean-up Basis)	P 34,000.00/lot
* 5.	One (1) lot used transformer oil approximately 10, 000 liters, located at Botocan HEP, Majayjay, Laguna	P 80,000.00/lot

* DENR permit is required for participating bidders

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN OF THE BIDDER OR FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY (2002, original or certified true copy of BIR).

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for the said bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/schedule from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Bldg 1 Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, corner Agham Rd and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call tel. no. 924-5384.

Interested parties for Schedule II, item nos. 1&2, scrap items and waste oil, the bidding shall be conducted simultaneously at NPC Palimpinon Extension office, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental and the NPC Head Office. Visayas bidders may secure bid from P500.00 for the said schedule from Mr. Rodolfo C. Pascaña, Plant Manager, Palimpinon GPP 1 & 2.

Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 PM January 26, 2004 for Sch-I, January 27, 2004 for Sch-II and January 28, 2004 for Sch-III.

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – January 8, 9 & 10, 2004)

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Meralco Ave cor Lot 48T / sm Ok 4 Hi-ris Call 645-3731

QUEZON CITY

952 sqm cor E. Rodriguez & D.Tuason 0916-6878481

COMML/RESOL

KALOOCAN

400m² Camarin with 2drs & 1 bathw 4214742;09182583639

HOUSE & LOT

LAS PINAS

950T 2BR 2STY 8054686

Casimiro Vill L Pinas LA 501m² FA 200m² 5M Call Ed 4715190 09165777792

LAS PINAS / BACOOR
2-4 BRs., 1-3 T&B, 2 Storey
P5,000.00 to Reserve / No Loan Req
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MAKATI

Nice 2-storey 4BR w/T&B San Miguel Village, Makati BEST BUY! DBO •896-3927•

MANILA

NR LA SALLE
BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge
P3.295M 8903461 loc 34

MARIKINA

New 4BR 3TB 2.8M 9487112

PARANAQUE

4-5BR Nr. Mkti/Airport
822-9993 • 0922-8088800

B'New P3M 4br 3tb attic grge nr BF Sucat T-8937010(Otc) 8257808/09206387794

QUEZON CITY

ALL AROUND BEAUTICIAN SAN JUAN AREA 723-1869

KAMUNING NEW BUNG
Nr Market 180m² P5.5M 9K4th 724-2629 or 415-2395

Nr Ateneo 9M & Up Build as per Specs Call 645-3731

Nr QC CITY HALL bnew bful 3sty w/sky garden 5BR6TB P7.5M 3Matulungin 7242629

PROJ.6 BNEW 9263307

SAMAR AVENUE PROPERTY
4BR 3TB 375m² Bungalow
Call 951-1624 ; 911-1978

Tandang Sora Twn Hse P1.5M unfinished 931-4946

Teachers Village 5BR 4TB 2Car Grge 9132701/9132403

WHITE PLAINS P19M
579m² 6br & 6t&b P19M Neg 9114329

RIZAL

250sqm 4br 2lb md / tb 2car twn & country Call 634-9500

OTHER AREAS

266 sqm Call 984-7901

BATANGAS

AYALA PROPERTY AT STO TOMAS BATANGAS 364 SQM. HOUSE N LOT 2.5M NEG 500T DP BAL 2 YRS TO PAY W/O INT 0918-9424538

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Notice is hereby given that the property of 2,292 Has. agri/residential lots at Tanawan, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija is being offered for sale by:
1. Cambitala Primary Multi-Purpose Kilusang Bayan, Inc., CLOA-0-1290 to 1291.
2. East Poblacion Primary Multi-Purpose Kilusang Bayan, Inc., CLOA-0-1297 to 1298.
3. Buklod ng Pagmumulong Gubat sa Malaas na Bundok, Inc. CLOA-0-1299 to 1301.
4. Samahang Magsasaka ng Pantabangan Foundation sa Nueva Ecija CLOA-0-1294

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MASTER C RE-DE, INC.
TEL.# 913-5223/921-4883
if 922-4464/913-7632

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Nr Muzon 1700/mo 9390299

LAGUNA

Binan 3T/mo 25yrs 9390299

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.6M C5 Nr The Fort
12T/mo. or 3Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mkti 0917-8313225

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P3.435M 8903461 loc 34

Kensington Parkplace in Fort Bonifacio Call 634-9580

MAKATI CONDO 55m² w/1 BR kitchen/T&B 9114705; 9114649

P1.5M CONDO NR. MAKATI P10T M.A., OR 10% DP. MOVE-IN 2-5BR's AVAIL. ALSO IN ORTIGAS. CALL 873-64-26, 0919-6375053.

MANILA

Nr UST 3.6M 4br 3lb 1cg Nr bank, Loan Ok Call 845-3731

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VV5 3BR 197 FA T634-9500

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SAN JUAN CONDO 3BR-3.5M T.H.-5.5M 09184491555

LOT

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QUEZON CITY

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Tierra Pura-Mira Nila choice lots 931-4946

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

FARM/FISHPEN/RAWLANDS

LOT

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HOUSE

SAN JUAN

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CONDO/TWNHSE

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MAKATI

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RIVERSIDE TOWNHOMES NEAR EVER GOTESCO-PASIG CALL MARIFE 421-3785/86

QUEZON CITY

2BR Furn P15T/mo Good Location Call Savell 6461603

3BR 2TB 108m² w/ parking 12T •Valencia cor Castilla QC 7267909•09175325833 Rowena

OHT-3 2br furnish Unit 17-H East Wood City Libis 633-0164

SAN JUAN

1Wilson 2BR 20T 4121825

Ghills Stu P11T FF 929-9835

APARTMENT

MAKATI

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MANILA

1557 A. Isip Paco w/ garage 2BR 1TB 5610197, 5636296

MANDALUYONG

845 Samat St., Mand. City Tel. # 5337709 to 12

PARANAQUE

8201453 PQUE LOPEZ SUCAT

PASAY

2STRY 2BRM 1TB 8438173

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

QUEZON CITY

Cubao 3.8 Sid Lady 9124428

Sct. Area 3BR 2TB Dan Mds Rm w/Bath 3723326, 3739643

Studio nr UP 4T T4362272

Townhouse nr Visayas Ave T.Sora 2BR 2TB New 11T Tel. 727-0286 Emily

ROOM & BOARD

Pr|3 new 3.5T studio9137513

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MANDALUYONG

RM w/own TB nr Boni Ave Ladies Only Tel • 5343484

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2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

BUSN DRS OFW 524-3197

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TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

HONDA

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TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

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TOWNACE VAN 225T 9267383

OTHER CAR BRANDS

Pajero Land Cruiser Surf Delica Space Gear Serena Solari Terrano Mu Previa Town-Hi Ace Vanette Elf Canter etc A1 w/warranty T-In 9120647 09178342020

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1.5% CARLOAN 788-0357

1.5% CARLOAN 952-2510

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/o Taking Car 6567685

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 3731021

2% w/oTaking Car 8956630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

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GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

WANTED TO BUY

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- Experience as a call center agent an advantage

1 PROGRAMMER (Code: PRG)
Required Proficiency: HTML, Java, JavaScript, ASP, PHP, JSP, MySQL
- Excellent in English communication skills Male/Female
- Graduate of BS Computer Science or related course
- Mature, hardworking, trustworthy and can work with minimum supervision
- 2 years experience as programmer an advantage.
- Submit sample websites or work documents

Interested applicants may email their CV or Resume in MS Word format and send it to msabado@storeseonline.com on or before January 12, 2004.

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TYPIST / STENOGRAPHER
- Male, 25 years old and above
- Graduate of a four-year college course
- With typing speed of 45 WPM and steno at 60 WPM

Qualified applicants may apply in writing or in person with recent photo to:

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626 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City
(in front of Funeraria Paz)

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MALE/FEMALE

COMMISSION ON APPOINTMENTS
Pasay City
ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY
Pursuant to Mandate of R.A. 7041 One (1) Legislative Staff Officer IV (Jr Computer Programmer) SG 20-1 Item# 51 Q.S.: Bachelor's degree relevant to the job, Two (2) years of relevant experience, Eight (8) hours of relevant training in Computer Programming (MS Visual Fox Pro) and Career Service Professional eligible. Send Comprehensive Resume' with 2x2 colored picture to: Commission on Appointments, 6F PNB Financial Center, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Blvd., Pasay City

★ TALENT MANAGER ★
w/ experience in site club bookings
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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

CAREGIVER TRAINING 5271590

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE CESAR GABRIEL LEUTERIO WAS EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED AMONG HIS HEIRS AS PER DOC NO 244, PAGE NO 50, BOOK NO 29, SERIES OF 2003 UNDER NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. RAMON U DE GUZMAN OF QUEZON CITY (PDI – JAN 3, 10 & 17, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

RETIRE 2YRS 09189051587

RTW Inventry sale 3738821

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Occupational Safety and Health Center
North Avenue cor. Agham Road,
Diliman, Quezon City, ☎ 929-6036 to 39

NOTICE OF VACANT POSITIONS

(1) Information Officer III
SG-18 (P14,098.00/m); Item # 47; CS-Prof.; Bachelor's degree; (2) years of relevant experience; (8) hours of relevant training.

(1) Engineer II
SG-16 (P14,098/m); Item # 71-1; RA1080; Bachelor's degree in Engineering relevant to the job; (1) year of relevant experience; (4) hours of relevant training

(2) Industrial Hygienist III
SG-16 (14,098.00/m); Item # 84-1 & 2; CS-Prof; Bachelor's degree preferably graduate of Mechanical Engineering; (1) year of relevant experience; (4) hours of relevant training.

(1) Human Resource Management Officer II
SG-15 (P13,300.00/m); Item # 39, CS-Prof., Bachelor's degree; (1) year of relevant experience; (4) hours of relevant training.

Note:
- *Incomplete requirements will not be processed*

Requirements: Comprehensive Resume with 2x2 picture
CSC Eligibility/Board Rating
Transcript of Records - (cert. true copy)
Diploma - (cert. true copy)
Certificate of Trainings Attended
Certificate of Employment (if applicable)

Send Resume to: The Office of the Executive Director, Occupational Safety and Health Center, North Ave. cor. Science Road, Diliman, Quezon City or through e-mail oshcenter@oshc.dole.gov.ph Deadline for submission is on 16 January 2004.

PRIVATE TUTOR/THERAPIST

Full time position. Candidate will handle a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Qualifications:

- 21-28 years old Male
- With or without previous experience
- Graduate of Psychology, SPED, Early Childhood Education, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy
- Can communicate well in English
- Has good disposition in handling special children

Interested applicants may submit their resumé with latest photo via mail to:

Ms. Maria Anna Enriquez
Re: Private Tutor/Therapist
Unit 506, 5/F Tower 1
Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue
Makati City

or email to nina9886@info.com.ph
Walk-in applicants will not be entertained.

REGIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATE

World Vision International-Asia Pacific Regional Office (WVI-APRO), an international Christian humanitarian organization, is looking for a mature, self motivated & experienced individual who can manage selected IT projects covering the Asia Pacific Region. WVI-APRO is based in Manila and works strategically with National Offices throughout the Asia Pacific Region (currently 20+ countries)

This will involve
- Testing, supporting and deployment of new applications across the Asia Pacific Region
- It involves the training and coaching of IT coordinators in selected countries
- Participating in the global forums to determine appropriate standards for IT in the context of World Vision's work

Interested applicants must have the following qualifications
- Requires a Bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems, Computer Science, Business Administration or technical training equivalent plus 3-5 years experience
- Experience with various MS Operating Systems, Cisco Firewalls, MS SQL and Lotus Notes is required; certification in any of these areas is preferred
- Must have strong analytical, problem-solving and organizational skills
- Requires ability to express some technically and functionally intensive concepts to lay users (verbally and/or in writing using primarily the English language) effectively in one-on-one as well as large group settings. Must have good facilitation skills
- Must have good communication and interpersonal skills in a cross-cultural setting
- Requires experience in project management, control and monitoring, knowledge of industry accepted documentation and applicable standards
- Ability and willing to travel internationally up to 30%

You can send your CV to Marissa Lega by e-mail at marissa_lega@wvi.org or by mail at PO Box 13004 Ortigas Center Post Office Pasay City 1605. Applications should be submitted no later than Jan 19 2004

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PASEO DE ROXAS AVENUE, MAKATI CITY

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- GUARANTEED FINANCING
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CAVITE

Lot 1 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 868 sqm
LOT 10 BLK 15 CITYVIEW 1 BRGY. KALINAWAN, TANZA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 372,000

Lot 2 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 200 sqm
LOT 12 BLK 10 CONNECTICUT ST, MANUELAVILLE SUBD., BUROL, DASMARIÑAS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 618,000

Lot 3 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
LOT 40 BLK 7, RODEO COUNTRY ESTATE, BRGY MANGGAS ALFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,013,000

Lot 4 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,347 sqm
LOT 51 BLK 12, MANGA ST. GREENFIELD HTS, BUCAL, DASMARIÑAS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,810,000

Lot 5 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 6,504 sqm
LOT 6414, BRGY ZAMBAL, TAGAYTAY CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 2,052,000

Lot 6 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
LOT 10 BLK 10, RODEO COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE, ALFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,200,000

Lot 7 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 825 sqm
LOT 12, BLK 6, RODEO COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE, ALFONZO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 981,000

Lot 8 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
LOT 17 BLK 7 RODEO COUNTRYSIDE SUBD ESPERANZA ALFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 840,000

Lot 9 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
LOT 19 BLK 7 RODEO COUNTRYSIDE SUBD ESPERANZA ALFONSO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 840,000

Lot 10 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 842 sqm
LOT 1-B BISITA ST., DINAKAYAN, KAWIT
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 6,000,000

Lot 11 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 88 sqm Floor Area: 50 sqm
LOT 14 BLK 9, NARA ST., GREENWOOD HOMS, ANABU IMUS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 492,000

Lot 12 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 90 sqm Floor Area: 80 sqm
LOT 17 BLK 18-C, YAKAL, BUHAN RESETTLEMENT PH 3, SILANG
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 410,000

Lot 13 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 88 sqm Floor Area: 51 sqm
LOT 24 BLK 33, SAINT CLEMEN ST. WINWARD HILLS SUBD., BUROL, DASMARINAS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 316,000

Lot 14 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300 sqm
Floor Area: 304 sqm
112 RIZAL ROAD, MALIKSI, BACOOR
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,600,000

Lot 15 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 97 sqm Floor Area: 75 sqm
LOT 56 BLK 66, WINWARD HILLS SUBD., PHASE 2, DASMARINAS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 730,000

Lot 16 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 832 sqm
Floor Area: 78 sqm
271 COVELLANDIA ROAD, BINAKAYAN, KAWIT
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,877,000

Lot 17 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300 sqm
Floor Area: 158 sqm
LOT 31 BLK 1, DON GREGORIO HEIGHTS SUBD., BRGY ARUGOT, DASMARIÑAS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,330,000

Lot 18 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 203 sqm
Floor Area: 61 sqm
LOT 1 BLK 8 FIREWOOD COR EVERLASTING STS STA CECILIA SUBD MULAWIN TANZA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 773,000

Lot 19 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 900 sqm
Floor Area: 180 sqm
LOT 1052-C-1 BO TIMALAN NAIC
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 810,000

LAGUNA

Lot 20 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 126 sqm
LOT 34 BLK 29, PHASE 1-D, GOLDEN CITY SUBD DILA STA ROSA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 200,000

Lot 21 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 136 sqm
LOT 18878 BRGY STA MARIA MAGDALENA SAN PABLO CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 368,000

Lot 22 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 175 sqm
LOT 3003-NEW-B-6 PH II, SPRINGHOMES SUBD., BUCAL
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 313,000

Lot 23 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 211sqm
Floor Area: 468 sqm
LOT 1149-B BO POOK STA ROSA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 3,556,000

Lot 24 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 240 sqm
Floor Area: 96 sqm
LOT 418-X-13-A-1, VILLA SOLEDAD SUBD., SAN CRISTOBAL CALAMBA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 740,000

Lot 25 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 136 sqm
Floor Area: 40 sqm
LOT 30-A, ST. CHRISTOPHER II ANNEX, BRGY. MAJADA, CALAMBA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 570,000

Lot 26 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 130 sqm
Floor Area: 40 sqm
LOT 3 BLK 2, VILLA ESTELA SUBD, BACLARAN, CABUYAO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 370,000

Lot 27 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 265 sqm
Floor Area: 88 sqm
LOT 25 BLK 18, ILOILO ST., SOUTH CITY HOMES PH2 BTO TOMAS, BIÑAN
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 907,000

Lot 28 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 141 sqm
Floor Area: 60 sqm
LOT 32 BLK 2 DON PABLO SUBD, TAGAPO, STA ROSA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 766,000

Lot 29 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 378 sqm
Floor Area: 40 sqm
277 BRGY LOOC, CALAMBA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 460,000

Lot 30 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,288 sqm
Floor Area: 68 sqm
LOT 245-C # 92 CABALLERO ST., BRGY. BAMPIRUHAN CALAMBA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 4,124,000

Lot 31 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 200 sqm
Floor Area: 57 sqm
LOTS 11 & 12 BLK 5, RAYMUNDA AVE MILLWOOD SUBD., PULO, CABUYAO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 710,000

Lot 32 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 180 sqm
Floor Area: 40 sqm
LOT 10 BLK 4 MA. JESUSA SUBD., BALIBAGO, STA ROSA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 496,000

Lot 33 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 600 sqm
Floor Area: 42 sqm
LOT 23 BLK 4, BLISS HOUSING, PACIANO RIZAL, BAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 477,000

Lot 34 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 236 sqm
Floor Area: 64 sqm
LOT 2-B-2-1-B VILLA ESTELA SUBD, BACLARAN, CABUYAO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 630,000

Lot 35 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 180 sqm
Floor Area: 115 sqm
LOT 8 BLK 4, ABELARDO ST., CHRYSANTHEMUM VILL., SAN PEDRO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,104,000

Lot 36 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 582 sqm
Floor Area: 80 sqm
PUROK 1 BRGY. TRANCA, BAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 360,000

Lot 37 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 393 sqm
Floor Area: 88 sqm
115 PROVINCIAL ROAD, BRGY. MAITIM, BAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 981,000

Lot 38 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 350 sqm
Floor Area: 77 sqm
LOT 7 DULONG YLAYA, MALABAN, BINAN
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 566,000

Lot 39 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 82.5 sqm
Floor Area: 50 sqm
LOT 18 B BLOCK 18 FLORIDA ST SOUTHVILLE BLVD CALAMBOBO, BINAN
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 479,000

Lot 40 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 267.86 sqm
Floor Area: 110 sqm
LOT 317-A B64 VALEJO ST. MALUBAK STA ROSA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 842,000

Lot 41 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 240 sqm
Floor Area: 88 sqm
LOT 2 BLK 7 BEGONIA ST. CRISTI SUBD CANLUBANG, CALAMBA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 711,000

BATANGAS

Lot 42 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 402 sqm
LOT 5 BLK 2 ACELA HOMES SUBD., ANTIPOLO DEL NORTE, LIPA CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,478,000

Lot 43 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 186 sqm
LOT 2 BLOCK 4, ADASAKA ST. SAKURA EXECUTIVE SUBD. LIPA CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 484,000

Lot 44 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 801 sqm
LOT 847-B-3 INT B MORADA AVE LIPA CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 3,405,000

Lot 45 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,142sqm
FloorArea: 137sqm
OLD PROV'L ROAD COR BRGY ROAD, SITIO PAG-ASA, BRGY. PANTAY, CALACA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,353,000

Lot 46 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 115 sqm
Floor Area: 42 sqm
LOT 4 BLK 5, SAN ISIDRO VILLAGE, BATANGAS CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 559,000

Lot 47 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 115 sqm
Floor Area: 42 sqm
LOT 6 BLK 5 SAN ISIDRO VILLAGE, BATANGAS CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 559,000

RIZAL

Lot 48 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 350 sqm
LOT 18 BLK 4, CHELSEA ST., CATALINA I MISSION HILLS SUBD., MUZON, ANGONO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,380,000

Lot 49 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 350 sqm
LOT 13 BLK 4, CEDAR ST, CATALINA I MISSION HILLS SUBD., MUZON, ANGONO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,389,000

Lot 50 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 250 sqm
LOT 2-1-3, TICZON CMPD HERBAL PARK P. OLIVEROS ANTIPOLO CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 645,000

Lot 51 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 170 sqm
LOT 8 BLK 5, CRESTLINE RD., RIDGEMONT EXEC VILL. SAN ISIDRO TAYTAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 461,000

Lot 52 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 170 sqm
Lo[illegible] COR DALLAS & CARL [illegible]/S GREENLAND NEWTON SUBD BO NANGKA SAN MATEO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 654,000

Lot 53 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 257 sqm
LOT 1 BLK 16, VOLVO ST VILLAGE EAST EXEC HOMES MUNTING DILAO ANTIPOLO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 684,000

Lot 54 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 204 sqm
LOT 6 BLK 104, PAJERO ST., VILLAGE EAST EXEC HOMES PH 3, BRGY MUNTING DILAO ANTIPOLO CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 477,000

Lot 55 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 180 sqm
LOT 8 BLK 10 ANDROMEDA HOMES BO SAN ISIDRO ANGONO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 296,000

Lot 56 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 72 sqm
Floor Area: 36 sqm
LOT 25 BLK 1, GREENROSE SUBD PH 3, SAN RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 232,000

Lot 57 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 252 sqm
Floor Area: 103 sqm
LOT 11 BLK 4, #26 EDWARD VIII ST. KINGSVILLE SUBD., MAYAMOT, ANTIPOLO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,200,000

Lot 58 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 307 sqm
Floor Area: 201 sqm
LOT 3 BLK 13, FLORENS ST SAN FRANCISCO VILL MUZON TAYTAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,866,000

Lot 59 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 330 sqm
Floor Area: 120 sqm
EMERALD ST FRANCESCA HOMES CAINTA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,360,000

Lot 60 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 481 sqm
Floor Area: 180 sqm
LOT 7 BLK 10 #22 CRUZEIRO ST. MERALCO SUB TAYTAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,940,000

Lot 61 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 265 sqm
Floor Area: 187 sqm
LOT 8 BLK 12 # 111 SUNRISE DR. BROKSIDE HILLS SUBD CAINTA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 912,000

Lot 62 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 208 sqm
Floor Area: 151 sqm
#23 RIZAL ST MERALCO VILLAGE, SAN JUAN TAYTAY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 871,000

Lot 63 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 150 sqm
Floor Area: 73 sqm
LOT 15 BLK 8, EMERALD ST PINES CITY ROYALE ANTIPOLO CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 623,000

Lot 64 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 204 sqm
Floor Area: 182 sqm
LOT 26 BLK 40, #23 LANCIA ST., VILLAGE EAST EXEC HOMES, ANTIPOLO CITY
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,771,000

Lot 65 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 102 sqm
Floor Area: 103 sqm
#32 SUNFLOWER COR MORNING GLORY STS. GREENLAND EXEC VILL PH IV-B CAINTA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,129,000

Lot 66 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 240 sqm
Floor Area: 192 sqm
LOT 5 BLK 4, 4TH ST., PLEASANT HOMES, STO NINO, ANGONO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 727,000

Lot 67 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 74 sqm
Floor Area: 101 sqm
LOT 21 BLK 2 HOMEPOINT VILL SUBD SAN ISIDRO ANGONO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 551,000

Lot 68 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 74 sqm Floor Area: 42 sqm
LOT 20 BLK 2 HOMEPOINT VILLAGE SUBD SAN ISIDRO ANGONO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 260,000

Lot 69 - TOWNHSE
Lot Area: 60 sqm Floor Area: 53 sqm
LOT 8 BLK 13, HOUSE MAROON, HIGHGATE SUBD, MAMBUGAN, ANTIPOLO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 603,000

VALENZUELA

Lot 70 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 137 sqm
LOT 40 BLK 17, MAIN AVE COR 22ND ST., METRO VILLA SUBD., MAPULANG LUPA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 821,000

QUEZON CITY

Lot 71 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 300 sqm
LOT 31 BLK 70 YUAN ST., NORTH FAIRVIEW SUBD PHASE 8
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,212,000

Lot 72 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 362 sqm
Floor Area: 390 sqm
LOT 4 BLK 7, NO. 19 TRINITY ST MARIES VILL., TANDANG SORA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 5,063,000

Lot 73 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 180 sqm
Floor Area: 90 sqm
LOT 2 BLK 3 RUBY ST SAN PEDRO 8 TANDANG SORA
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,135,000

Lot 74 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 336 sqm
Floor Area: 302 sqm
L12F1, #2 POLICIANO BERNARDO ST BAGONG LIPUNAN, CUBAO DIS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 2,010,000

Lot 75 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
WITHDRAWN

Lot 76 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 232.7 sqm
Floor Area: 167 sqm
L20 B83, #30 INT 1 ZOBEL DIOQUINO 7 OBEL PROJECT 4
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,200,000

Lot 77 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,010 sqm
Floor Area: 51 sqm
18 A INT FIDELCRUZ ST 18 CRUZ SUBD NOVALICHES
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,316,000

Lot 78 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 262 sqm
Floor Area: 140 sqm
LOT 4 BLK 4, 16 CHOPIN ST., GREENVILLE SUBD., BAUYO, NOVALICHES
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,360,000

Lot 79 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 181 sqm
Floor Area: 78 sqm
30 SAN IGNACIO ST., BGY OULOD NOVALICHES
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 732,000

Lot 80 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 447.7 sqm
Floor Area: 286 sqm
NO 21 DON JOSE ST., BRGY SAN ROQUE CUBAO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 5,500,000

MANILA

Lot 81 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 73.7 sqm
Floor Area: 196 sqm
B14-1-E IBERIOSA EXT TONDO
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,216,000

MAKATI CITY

Lot 82 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 324 sqm
Floor Area: 108 sqm
5 PONTI ST M DELA PAZ SUBD BRGY BUGKAMAS
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 4,600,000

PASAY CITY

Lot 83 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 174 sqm
Floor Area: 114 sqm
2704 INTERIOR CABRERA ST., OCHOA COMPOUND, SAN ROQUE
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,169,000

PARANAQUE CITY

Lot 84 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 175 sqm
Floor Area: 192 sqm
LOTS 20 & 21, BLK 1 MATTHEW ST., ANNEX 35 BETTER LIVING SUBD
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 2,312,000

Lot 85 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 250 sqm
Floor Area: 137 sqm
LOT 61 BLK 13, #88 FC SANTOS ST. BF HOMES PH III
Minimum Bid Price: PhP 1,646,000

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Photo courses

PHOTOGRAPHY buffs, young and old, who want to learn more can take the basic and advanced courses offered by the Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation (FPPF).

The first basic workshop for this year will start January 11 while the advanced January 10.

The venue is Yslas Restaurant inside Fort Bonifacio in Intramuros, Manila. The 4-Sunday photo workshop is designed for beginners, hobbyists, commercial photographers, college students taking up masscom, com arts, fine arts, architecture, interior design and advertising.

The workshop are conducted by professional photographers – Vic Sison, Tony Raval, Ador Pamintuan, Ed Santiago, Tillak Hettige, and Prof. Cecilia Angeles. The workshops are under the auspices of the FPPF, Fujifilm/YKL and the Intramuros Administration. Call FPPF c/o Angel Daylo / Boy Capala at 7/F Comfoods Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Chino Roces Ave., Makati City Tel. 813-7420 / 843-5341

De Rueda clan reunion

THE DE Rueda Clan will hold its annual Balik-Tipon family reunion on Jan. 11 at the Central School South District Gymnasium of San Miguel, Bulacan, as announced by Ramon Rueda Padolina, president of the Rueda Clan and lawyer Ernesto Rueda. Relatives in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Metro Manila and neighboring provinces are invited to attend the whole-day affair. Hosting the Balik-Tipon reunion is Ramon Padolina.

For more information, call lawyer Rueda at 740-0743, Ramon Padolina at 936-7805. In Bulacan, call Ado and Efren Rueda of San Miguel, Peter Rueda and Rancy Rueda Garcia of Plaridel and Senador Rueda of Baliwag. In Nueva Ecija, call Rene Rueda of Gapan at (044)486-0168, Lorenzo Rueda of San Nicolas, Gapan Eliseo Rueda of Cabiao and Rolando (Willy) Balajonda of Baloc, Sto. Domingo and in Balanga City, call Gerry Rueda at (047)237-2227.

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PAZ

Our Dear Mommy
and Beloved Lola

Corito Araneta vda de Kalaw

Peacefully joined our Creator
and her loving husband ***Hadji***
on the 8th of January 2004
at the age of 79.

Her children **Paula, Vicky, Eddie** and **Corina**, children-in-law **Jose, Tony, Pinky** and **Ricky**, grandchildren **Aldous, Patricia, Derek, Chesa, Carissa, Angela** and **Sabine**, sister **Jenny** and dear friend **Pitoy** request your prayers for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her remains will lie in state at the chapel of Assumption College, San Lorenzo Village, Mass will be celebrated at 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 10, prior to her cremation.

Requiem Mass will be at 1 p.m. on Sunday, January 11, at the Parish of St. James the Great, Ayala Alabang.

ELSIE "Inday" REYES-CADAPAN

(September 12, 1939 - January 7, 2004)

Joined our Lord JESUS CHRIST painting a piece of heaven with her beautiful colors.

We, spouse **Engr. Rudy C. Cadapan**, only daughter **Magel**, son-in-law **Paul**, her bundles of Joy - **Samuel & Karola** and palangga sisters **Caring** & **Mary** invite relatives and friends to rejoice in her homecoming for a life well-lived for the Glory of God at the Our Lady of Peace Memorial Services, Carigma St., Antipolo City.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 11, 2004, 2:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Memorial Park, Sto. Niño St., Antipolo City.

(Please omit flowers)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." – John 3:16

ANTONIO A. SOLDEVILLA, JR.

Died peacefully on January 7, 2004 at the age of 61.

His loving wife **Nieva** (†); sons **Fr. Jeremy, SDV, Antonio III** and **Jenifer, Noli, Nanette**; sisters **Sete, Zelma, Renee'** and **Jeremy Carter**; granddaughter **Jianna**, nephews and nieces, and other relatives request to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 2C, Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Holy Masses will be celebrated everyday during the wake at 6:30 p.m.

Interment will be announced later.

Our Dearly Beloved

ESTHERBELLA N. RANCES

died peacefully on the 5th of January 2004 at the age of 52.

Her loving husband **Ed**; children **Kat-kat, Byosh, Jed** and **Edjie**, relatives and friends requests the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Nacional Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on 11 January 2004 at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora, Quezon City after the 8 a.m. Mass at the Nacional Memorial Chapels.

NORBERTA P. SANIDAD

May 21, 1921 - January 7, 2004

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Barangay San Roque, Guimba, Nueva Ecija

Interment will be on Sunday, January 11, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. at the Abad Memorial Cemetery, Guimba, Nueva Ecija.

JESUS CAESAR S. MEDENILLA

of 62 Olive St., SSS Village, Marikina City

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 5, 2004 at the age of 41.

His wife **Maria Linda Mariano Medenilla**; children **Em-em, Jhessie** and **Jaezon** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Inc., 296 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be today, January 10, 2004, 9:00 a.m. at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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CLASSIFIEDS

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The National Food Authority (NFA) is inviting all eligible palay Farmers' Organizations (FOs) to participate in the distribution of rice under the "FARMERS AS DISTRIBUTORS" (FAD) Program of the National Food Authority.

All interested parties are advised to accomplish a Letter of Intent (LOI), copies of which are available at the NFA Provincial Offices in their respective areas, to be submitted within ten (10) working days after the last day of publication. They should likewise meet the following qualifications:

- Must be operational and registered with any of the appropriate registering agencies as listed below
  - Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
  - Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
  - Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR)
  - Bureau of Rural Workers (BRW)
  - National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Must be a member of a local farmers' action council or the Philippine Farmers' Advisory Board (PFAB).
- Must be a holder of NFA license as retailer/wholesaler and other incidental lines of activities, i.e., warehousing and transporting, if any.
- Must be a holder of Certificate of Operations and Good Standing issued by the appropriate registering agency, to be submitted to the concerned NFA Provincial Office.

Specifically, the NFA has allocated a total volume of some 903,874 bags of rice for this Program, distributed among regions as follows:

Region	Allocation
NCR	4,248
Ilocos Region	84,241
Cagayan Valley	117,684
Central Luzon	126,452
Southern Tagalog	80,806
Bicol	61,554
Western Visayas	130,790
Central Visayas	19,524
Eastern Visayas	51,250
Western Mindanao	37,963
Northern Mindanao	42,844
Southern Mindanao	55,859
Central Mindanao	51,702
ARMM	38,957

For details, they may coordinate with the nearest NFA Office in their respective areas. For further inquiries, they may visit or contact NFA-DMO located at the 5th Flr., Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City with telephone nos. **712-1572, 712-1708** or **712-1564.**

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP**
Administrator, NFA

(PDI - Jan. 10, 11 & 12, 2004)

DepED
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TASK FORCE ENGINEERING, ASSESSMENT & MONITORING
DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue
Pasig City, Philippines

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

IFB Number : 2002-04-SEMP-DepED-SBP — January 8, 2004
Loan No. 7118 PH

Project Title: Social Expenditure Management Project 2 (SEMP 2) Under the 10% Unallocated Portion
Contract Title: Conservation of Heritage School Building

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for the Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to provide a budget support facility towards the financing of the Social Expenditure Management Project 2 (SEMP 2) in various currencies. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this facility will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts for School Building Program (SBP) to be implemented by the Department of Education (DepED).
2. The Department of Education (DepED) through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of DepED Central Office, DepED Complex, Pasig City now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Conservation of School Buildings at Rizal Elementary School and Baguio Central School.

School	Scope of Works
Rizal Elementary School, Bacolod City	Conservation of Heritage School Building
Baguio Central School, Baguio City	Conservation of Heritage School Building

3. For purposes of this bid, eligible bidders must have experience in works of similar nature and must have completed a restoration project for a heritage structure, preferably under the guidance of a qualified conservation architect.
4. Interested eligible bidders may acquire a complete set of bid documents starting January 16, 2004 for Rizal Elementary School and February 2, 2004 for Baguio Central School upon submission of a letter of intent to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) at DepED Central Office, DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City, Tel. No. 636-6543 or at DepED Division Offices of Bacolod City and Baguio City. A complete set of bid documents will be available for a non-refundable fee of Php 3,000.00.
5. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of the Contract are provisions of the World Bank Standard Bidding Documents, Procurement of Works.
6. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security of three (3%) percent of total bid price in the form of a bank guarantee, cashier's/manager's check or an irrevocable letter of credit.
7. Pre Bid Conference and Bid Opening dates are as follows:

School	Venue	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Opening
Rizal Elementary School	Bacolod City Division Office	February 3, 2004 / 2:00 PM	February 16, 2004 / 2:00 PM
Baguio Central School	Baguio City Division Office	February 18, 2004 / 2:00 PM	March 3, 2004 / 2:00 PM

8. The Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, or to annul the bidding process or reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without incurring any liability to Bidders.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary and Chair, Bids and Awards Committee
DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

(PDI – Jan. 10 & 17, 2004)

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Deep vein thrombosis common among Asians

By Charles E. Buban

THE BELIEF that postoperative deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is rare among Asians may not be true after all. Results of the Assessment of the Incidence of Deep vein thrombosis in Asia (Aida) study revealed that DVT is a common complication among Asians who underwent major orthopedic surgery of the lower limbs.

This was revealed last month during the 45th annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology in San Diego, California, and during a symposium organized by the Philippine Orthopedic Association and Sanofi-Synthelabo Philippines in Mandaluyong City.

This finding may soon affect the present practice in withholding routine drug treatment against DVT in Asian patients undergoing high-risk orthopedic procedures like total hip replacement, total knee replacement and hip fracture surgery.

The Aida study was aimed at assessing the incidence of DVT in patients undergoing major orthopedic surgery of the lower limbs and not receiving drug treatment for DVT. A total of 407 patients in seven Asian countries—China, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines—participated in the study.

Forty-five percent of these patients were found to have DVT six to 10 days after surgery, a prevalence close to that of Western countries, where a 50 percent to 60 percent prevalence was observed.

"In the Philippines, about 52 percent of patients involved in the study were positive for DVT," reported Dr. Lauro Abrahan, president of the Philippine Orthopedic Trauma Society, one of the investigators in the Aida study.

Blood clots

DVT is a dangerous medical condition in which the formation of a blood clot blocks circulation in the deep veins of the lower limbs that are primarily responsible for returning deoxygenated blood to the heart, according to Abrahan.

A blood clot can turn deadly if it breaks loose from the wall of the vein and migrates from the leg to the lungs where it can get lodged in lung arteries (called pulmonary embolism) and deprive lung tissues its much needed oxygen.

"This situation can be life-threatening because about 10 percent of people with pulmonary embolism die within the first hour if left untreated due to massive lung tissue death (called pulmonary infarction)," the doctor warned.

In some rare cases, a part of the clot may also lodge in other organs including the brain, where it leads to a stroke.

No previous proof

Before the Aida study, there was widespread belief that post-surgical DVT was rare among Asians. The fact that post-mortem examination is not encouraged—a procedure that could reveal presence of a blocking of a blood vessel by a blood clot—contributed to the lack of reliable data to disprove this belief.

"With the Aida study, we now have a much clearer picture and this may guide doctors in preventing DVT, especially among patients who underwent a major orthopedic surgery," said Abrahan.

Drugs used to treat deep vein thrombosis fall into three general classes:

• Anticoagulants, which inhibit blood coagulation and serve to weaken already formed clots, preventing further expansion

• Thrombolytic agents, which actually help dissolve clots

• Antiplatelet agents, which decrease activation of platelets and prevent new clots from being formed.

Symptoms

There is no clear symptom for DVT and in fact, some people only find out they have a DVT after the clot has moved from the leg and traveled to the lung. In this case, the patient may experience chest pains or shortness of breath, an indication that he is already suffering from pulmonary embolism.

In most cases, the patient may only experience swelling of the leg, pain or tenderness in the leg. The pain is usually in one leg and may only be present when standing or walking, a feeling of increased warmth in the area of the swollen leg, or red or discolored skin.

"It is important to see a doctor right away if you have symptoms of a pulmonary embolism or DVT," said Abrahan.

Weight loss supplements can be risky

MEDICAL FILES

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MULTILEVEL marketing is quite popular in the Philippines, and chances are marketers selling food supplements have offered you one containing ephedra, popularly known as *ma huang*. Last year, sales of these preparations reached several hundred million pesos, indicating how popular these are in our country.

Manufacturers claim these supplements are good for those who want to lose weight and improve their physical or athletic performance. It's supposed to give you a quick fix when you feel weak and fatigued.

Unscrupulous weight-loss clinics, heavily advertised in major broadsheets and endorsed by movie stars and other celebrities, are giving ephedra-like preparations to their patrons in mega-doses that are enough to cause serious side effects, perhaps even to carabaos.

Stimulant

Ephedra is an adrenaline-like stimulant that can have potentially dangerous effects on the heart; it can lead to heart attacks and strokes, even in young people.

The side effects of ephedra include insomnia, elevation in blood pressure, increased pulse rate or palpitations, anxiety, dry mouth and headaches. Ephedra has multiple adverse effects, particularly in large doses.

One effect is its action in the gastrointestinal tract. It decreases tone motility and secretory activity, which can result in nausea and vomiting.

The US Food and Drug Administration had previously warned people with heart disease, high blood pressure, thyroid disease, diabetes and/or an enlarged prostate that they should not take it.

Last week, the US FDA issued a consumer alert on ephedra preparations. It sent letters to supplement manufacturers warning them of an imminent restriction of sales of these products because they pose an unreasonable health risk.

After completing an extensive review of all scientific and clinical data, the US FDA will publish a final rule on ephedra in the coming weeks. The rule will provide the basis for FDA's conclusion that dietary supplements containing ephedrine alkaloids present an unreasonable risk of illness or injury.

It's likely that ephedra preparations will be officially banned in the US market soon. The local Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) should do the same.

Derived from plants

Ephedra, or *ma huang*, is a naturally occurring substance derived from plants. Its principal active ingredient is ephedrine, which when chemically synthesized becomes a regulated drug.

We used to think that any natural substance can't have serious side-effects. Herbals like *ampalaya*, mahogany seeds, Noni juice and comfrey are easily sold to gullible consumers.

But some natural substances may be saddled with significant side effects. Pharmaceutical preparations take 10 years or more before they're introduced into the market to make sure that their effectiveness and safety have been adequately evaluated, and the right dose determined.

Not effective

Ephedra users are bound to feel bad at the double-whammy it has caused them. It's not only risky, an extensive review of literature shows that it's also not as effective as its manufacturers claim it to be. This includes many studies reviewed by the Rand Corp., which found little evidence on its effectiveness other than for short-term weight loss.

If ephedra preparations are not banned, the least that can be done is to require manufacturers to include on their labels a strong warning about an association of ephedra use with serious adverse events, including heart attack, convulsions, stroke and death, and that the risk can increase with dose, strenuous exercise and other stimulants such as caffeine.

It should also specify certain high-risk groups (such as women who are pregnant or breastfeeding) who should never use these products. This warning should be prominently printed on the label and not in microscopic font sizes.

If you've been taking ephedra and you're still OK, it's best to quit while you're ahead.

Infinite fun

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

IS infinity a set, a number, a condition, a process, or some other entity we still have to rigorously define? There are infinite integers (my son was disappointed to learn that there was actually no end to counting, and that there was no biggest number—"Not even a gazillion gazillion?" he asked hopefully).

Rationals are infinite, so are irrationals, and thus, reals. Infinite reals exist between 0 and 1 (the apt term is "dense"). No one would quibble with these.

Can we compare infinities? For instance, are there more infinite integers than rational numbers?

Logically, this might seem to be the case, since all integers are rational numbers but not all rationals are integers. (The integer 2 is a rational number because it can be written as 2/1, but ½ is not an integer.)

But things in math are not always what they seem. Infinities are loaded with paradoxes, and mathematicians have attempted to make sense of them, and in some (possibly apocryphal) cases, drove them mad.

Transfinite numbers

The 19th-century math whiz Georg Cantor finally succeeded by positing concepts such as denumerability and transfinite numbers.

By the way, regarding the example above, Cantor ingeniously proved that the set of rationals can be placed into one-to-one correspondence with the set of integers, which means that they have the same cardinality (which he termed aleph-null)—ergo in this weird sense, their infinities are the same!

David Foster Wallace puts it well, "The whole idea of comparing the quote-unquote 'sizes' of infinite sets looks very freaky, since by definition an infinite set can have the same size (or cardinality) as a set it's by definition bigger than."

Are you still with us? If so, it would be instructive to peruse Wallace's most recent book "Everything and More: A Compact History of 8" (New York, Norton, 2003).

The squiggle which looks like the number 8 lying on its side is the math symbol for infinity. Like his celebrated work "Infinite Jest," this one contains Wallace's signature style of parenthetical exposition, replete with footnotes and asides.

First on math

Unlike his previous works though, this is his first foray into math, and for one who confesses that he didn't do well here in college, this book is a surprisingly technical account of one of its most difficult concepts.

Unlike many popular science writers, Wallace does not dwell so much on the personal idiosyncrasies of the mathematician (think about Sylvia Nassar's beautiful rendering not only of John Nash's math but also of his life) but on the details of Cantor's most significant discoveries (and what details these are—math symbols abound on practically every page, taking the reader on a journey into pure math thought).

Other mathematicians

I confess that even with a good math background, there were times I had to reread sections which I thought I had mastered. (Well worth it—I learned novel approaches to limits and series which I intend to try out on my students.)

Infinity is such a profound yet enticing concept that great minds over the centuries have wrestled with it in one form or the other. The mathematicians—Cantor, Bolzano, Weierstrass and Dedikind—are here, and so are the philosophers—Zeno, Plato and Aristotle.

Disjointed lists

Still, the book could have been better edited. The patchwork-like quality of some enumerations and footnotes could have been better handled with historical threads rather than forced into disjointed lists.

But I commend "Everything and More" for making an entertaining story out of abstruse concepts, and Wallace for courageously defying the dictum that each equation in a book halves the prospective number of buyers.

This work should be required reading for math students (and teachers).

Venturing into math

For the general reader who wants to venture into our realm, I can only say, Welcome! Our minds need constant exercise, and this book promises a great workout.

"Everything and More" is available at Aeon Bookstore, Unit 108 Loyola Heights Condo, 23 Esteban Abada St. corner Dela Rosa St., Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Aeon Bookstore is a delightful haven, with various tomes (philosophy, science, fiction and poetry) not available elsewhere. The owner, Marilou Gonzalez, is herself a confirmed bibliophile, and can be contacted at 926-9406 or mdgonzalez@pacific.net.ph.

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

US study finds no link between vaccines, autism

ATLANTA—US RESEARCHERS have found no significant link between childhood vaccines containing the mercury-based preservative thimerosal and neurological problems such as autism and attention-deficit disorder in a study of more than 140,000 children.

But critics charged that the study had been manipulated to protect the federal government and vaccine manufacturers from embarrassment and potential lawsuits.

Thimerosal, an organic compound that is 49 percent mercury, was used routinely in the United States between the 1930s and the 1990s to prevent bacterial and fungal contamination of infant vaccines. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the US Public Health Service recommended removing it from childhood vaccines in 1999 as a precaution. Studies have linked ingestion of mercury to neurological and renal problems in humans.

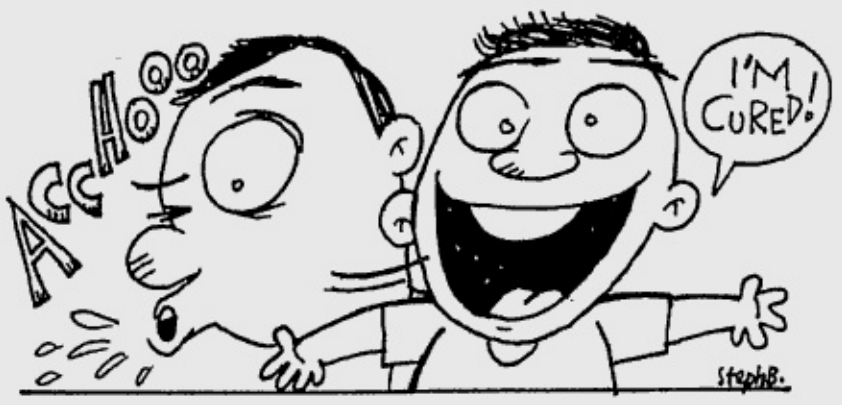
In a study of records from three US health management organizations, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the private sector found conflicting data when they screened for a connection between vaccines and neurological disorders in children born between 1991 and 1999.

One group of children who had received routine vaccines containing thimerosal had a higher incidence for tics, while a separate group had a higher rate of language delays.

A second phase of the study showed no significant links to such problems in another group.

"The final results of the study show no statistical association between thimerosal vaccines and harmful health outcomes in children, in particular autism and attention-deficit disorder," said Dr. Frank DeStefano, a CDC researcher who helped carry out the study.

But public health activists said neurological disorders had been found at significantly high rates in the original analysis of the study in 2000, but this had been watered down in the final version. *Reuters*



Cold virus cures skin cancer

THE COMMON cold virus most people try their hardest to avoid is very likely to be the cure for malignant melanoma, a team of researchers at the University of Newcastle has discovered in a major breakthrough.

Lead researcher, associate professor Darren Shafren, said they have established that melanoma cells can be destroyed by infecting them with coxsackievirus, a common cold virus.

"The results we have had using human cells and also in animal studies have been very exciting. If we can replicate this success in human trials then it could be available within a year or two," Shafren said.

He believes a treatment of the disease will be tested first on a few terminal patients and could be available even for advanced cases almost immediately. But it would be subject to regulatory hurdles, which could take longer. *AFP*

ASK THE DENTIST
Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Coffee stains

MY FRIEND and I always go out for coffee. Although we have the same coffee habit, my teeth are more stained than hers. It seems that I also have more tartar than she does. Why is that? What can I do so I won't have these coffee stains?

Anthony I.

You could stop drinking coffee to avoid the stains, but if the habit is too strong then brushing after meals might help. You need to evaluate your oral hygiene frequency and method. You might also need to go to the dentist more often. The regular interval is usually every six months. But if you are tartar-prone then you might need to go every three months. Try to be more observant on how fast the tartar forms on your teeth or you can ask your dentist for his opinion. Some people form tartar so quickly they can pick it out with their fingernail.

(E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.)

E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**
Assistant Editor **Stella O. Gonzales**

Present state of RP environment

By Leonarda N. Camacho
Unesco Commission on Science and Technology Contributor

LOGGING threatens the country's remaining 800,000 hectares of forest cover.

THE PHILIPPINES is an archipelago of 7,107 islands with only 300,000 square kilometers of land inhabited by some 90 million people.

What is unique about the Philippines is its 220 million hectares of territorial seas that contain the most biologically rich marine life in the world, the Sulawesi Marine Triangle.

What is fantastic about the Philippines is that it has the richest store of fish, corals and other marine life in the entire world.

Today, however, the Philippine environment is in a critical state: legal and illegal logging threatens its remaining 800,000 hectares of forest cover, unnecessary mining activities go on, and illegal fishing is done by "smart" businessmen.

This critical situation inspired the Commission on Science and Technology to undertake a comprehensive audit or inventory of the Philippine environment. In partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources which prepared the survey form, the commission sent out forms to all DENR regional, provincial and municipal directors, 79 provincial governors, 115 city mayors, 1,496 municipal mayors, and the members of the three largest women's organizations of the Philippines—the National Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines, the National Council of Women of the Philippines and the Rural Improvement Clubs of the Philippines.

Purpose of audit

We can never protect our environment and conserve our natural resources unless we know what we still have and where they are. Our policies, plans and programs will all be guesswork unless we know where we are starting from and where we want to go.

Formulating a strategic plan to ensure a healthy environment and productive natural resources is the dream of all Filipinos. An audit will map biodiversity hotspots and sensitive bioregions, track down land cover changes due to deforestation and flooding and monitor actual status of fishing grounds and coral reefs.

Actually, increasing population, overconsumption and dubious technology, and greed for money are driving the human impact on our environment.

Intact areas

As the reports flowed in since May 30, 2003, we learned that while there were bad news, there were also good news. There are significant areas that are still intact.

The only existing "pygmy forest" in the Philippines located at the border of Mati and San Isidro, Davao Oriental, is in danger. Pygmy forests, which are very rare in the world, have predominantly dwarf trees and plants due to abundant cobalt under the ground.

But this abundant cobalt is now threatening the forest. A foreign mining company and some local officials are moving heaven and earth to mine the forest, to hell with the environment and health of the people.

Mountains in the Caraballo Range in Nueva Vizcaya are still intact. But the audit report says two foreign companies are fighting tooth and nail with the local communities to mine gold and copper. The residents would rather continue with their citrus plantations.

Fighting soil erosion

In Maguindanao, communities are fighting soil erosion by weaving choir mats and placing them on eroding roads and highways. The communities are also using vetiver grass. They have 30,000 hectares of intact wetlands.

In Panay Island, the communities, with the help of the Philippine Endemic Species Conservation Project funded by Germany, are successfully maintaining seed banks for the propagation of indigenous trees.

Batanes and Catanduanes still have their pristine mountains, forests and rivers.

In Tayabas Bay, Quezon, the government is transplanting corals to replace those destroyed by cyanide fishing.

In the small island of Hingutanan, Bien Unido, Bohol, two water reservoirs are run by solar energy, benefiting about 3,000 residents.

On Maqueda Bay in Western Samar, 91 hectares have been planted to mangroves.

Palawan at risk

Now for the bad news. Palawan is in jeopardy.

It is bad enough that parts of Palawan were mined for the last 25 years of nickel ore, leaving behind environmental degradation and ill-health and poverty to the communities. Today, a foreign mining company, in conspiracy with some government officials, intends to build a hydrometallurgical processing plant. This is an environment disaster waiting to happen. Remember Marcopper in Marinduque?

Just as bad is the situation in Paracale, Camarines Norte. An alleged illegal and unlicensed gold processing plant is merrily engaged in making money to the detriment of the people's health. This has been going on for 10 years. Is the government aware of this?

Dams and environment

The San Roque Dam in San Manuel, Pangasinan, is now operational. However, there are howls of protest from environmentalists. And with reason. Small dams are less disaster-prone. Big dams like Aswan Dam in Egypt and Three Georges in China have created havoc on the environment.

Experts opine that while gigantic dams have brought benefits in water supply, the social and environmental costs have been high. More than 80 million people have been displaced globally, mostly tribal communities. The San Roque Dam displaced the Ibaloys.

Large dams damaged aquatic habitat and blocked migration routes for spawning species.

The Casecnan Dam in Nueva Ecija is a disappointment.

Another bad news is that illegal logging is going on in the Bislig Forests, Surigao, as well as in Quezon where DENR forest rangers were withdrawn for fear of illegal loggers.

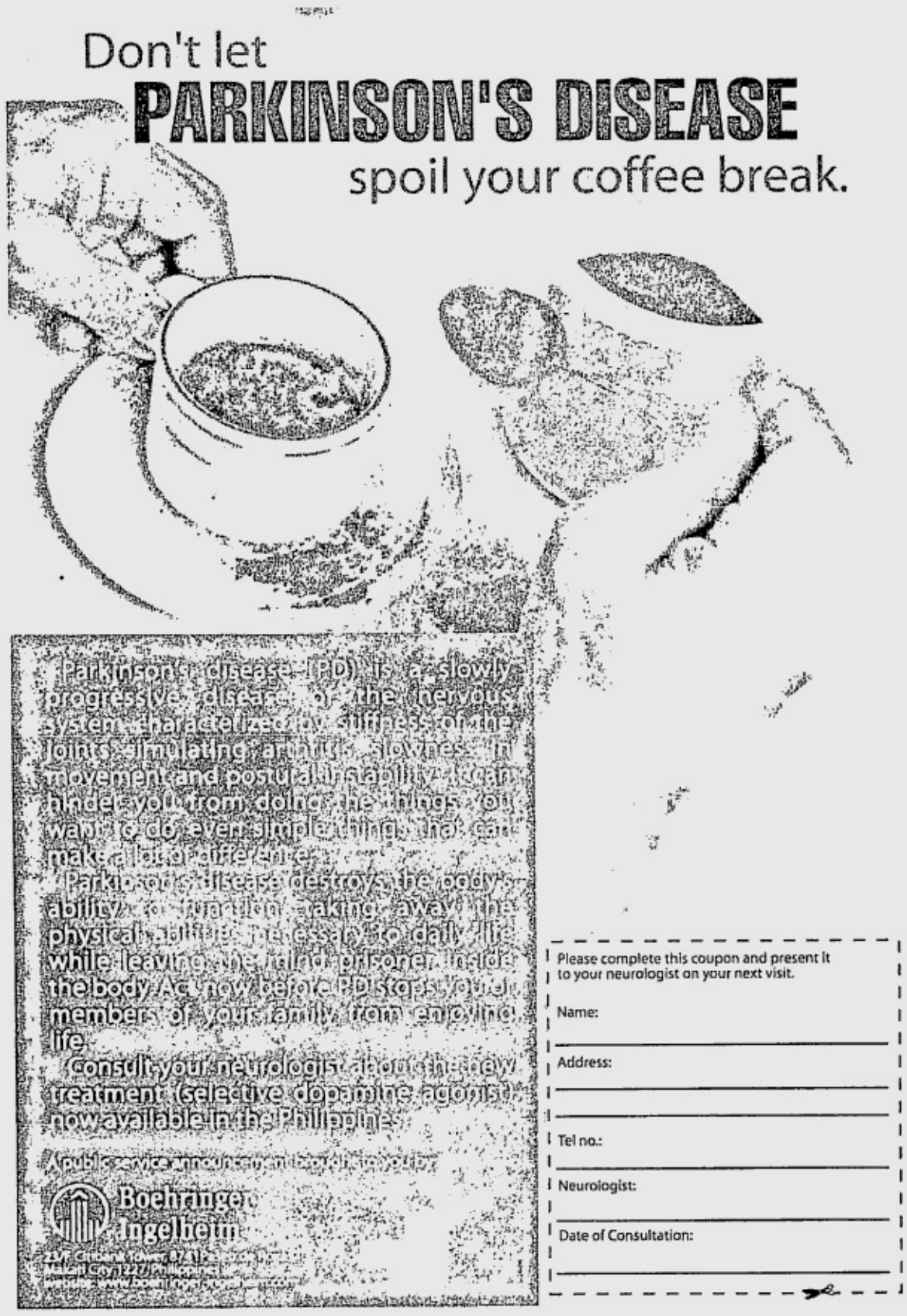
There is also the unbelievable marine poaching in the South China Sea and Batanes. But what takes the cake is the release of alien poachers caught in Batanes on grounds that the "rights of the poachers as recognized by international conventions and reflected in our Constitution are superior to the interests of the Ivatans."

Taking steps

This environment audit will be submitted to the national government, economic planners and decision makers, businessmen and environment scientists for remedial measures.

Then and only then will the Philippine government be able to correctly plan the reforestation of denuded forests, stop unnecessary mining, clean the rivers and lakes, and prevent overfishing and destruction of corals.

Then and only then will the biospheres of the Philippines be protected and conserved.



The year that was

(Conclusion)

LAST month the National Human Genome Research Institute announced that the first draft of the chimpanzee genome had been completed and was now available on several public databases for all scientists to access.

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

Of chimps and men

Because the chimpanzee is the primate that most resembles man genetically (99 percent of genes are shared), researchers from Cornell University and Celera Genomics compared the draft genome with the human genome.

The researchers said the ability to speak and the sense of smell may have been one of the key evolutionary differences between men and monkeys when they split off the family tree five million years ago.

"Several genes involved in the development of hearing also appear to have undergone adaptive evolution in the human lineage, and we speculate that understanding spoken language may have required tuning of hearing acuity," they wrote.

In other words, man learned to speak, and to listen to words, which affected what we hear and how we hear them.

Further comparisons are being explored by an international team of researchers including scientists from the University of Washington in Seattle, MIT and Harvard with hopes of understanding why chimps do not suffer from some diseases which affect humans and possibly finding new treatments.

Remember the nicotine

According to behavioral pharmacologist Dr. Edward Levin and his colleagues at Duke University, small amounts of nicotine could actually help older patients with Alzheimer's and similar conditions, including those having so-called "senior moments," to focus on current events and improve their ability to remember.

Eleven nonsmoking patients between 60 and 90 years took a standardized test, were asked to wear a nicotine patch for four weeks, and then retook the test. Results showed that the length of time it took patients to select answers on the test dropped by half after wearing the nicotine patch.

Apparently scientists have long known about nicotine's ability to boost memory retention, although slapping a nicotine patch on your arm to help you remember the name of the high school classmate you just ran into at the mall and spoke to for 45 minutes is not recommended.

Dr. Levin also emphasizes that smoking leads to long-term conditions whose effects far outweigh any potential mental benefits.

Long life and lipoproteins

We've been taught that cholesterol is a bad word, especially if it's preceded by the word "high." But a study by Dr. Nil Barzilai of the Institute for Aging Research received attention because it talked about the relationship between low cholesterol and people who lived very long lives.

The study looked at several families of Ashkenazi Jewish extraction, with special attention paid toward those who members regularly lived to be 90 or older. Blood tests revealed that the longer-living people had larger lipoprotein particles than the control group.

So if you've never been able to fill out medical forms when it comes to family medical history, take a look now and find out what your chances are of living to be 100. A healthy diet and regular exercise don't hurt either.

As the drunk worm turns

Researchers at the University of California at San Francisco used the nematode *C. elegans*, better known as the first organism whose genome was sequenced, to find out why some people have a higher tolerance for alcohol than others. The results of six years of work suggest that the version of the slo-1 gene in a person's genetic code determines how much alcohol he can drink.

Researchers exposed to varying levels of alcohol several thousands of the one millimeter-long worms, some with the normal slo-1 gene and others which later turned out to have various mutations of the same gene. Over time, researchers noticed that worms with the mutated slo-1 gene were moving slowly in S-shaped patterns while those with the normal slo-1 gene wiggled around as quickly and normally as if they hadn't been drinking at all.

Because the slo-1 gene helps control a BK potassium ion channel, researchers are now focusing on the relationship between potassium channels and alcohol in the human brain to come up with a drug or treatment for alcohol-related diseases.

Other topics

There were other stories that didn't make it to this list, but that doesn't mean you can't go out and look them up yourselves.

Here are some you might find interesting: the relationship between motherhood and the brain's reward center, the relationship between the brain's reward center and love and trust, the link between sexual differentiation, gender and the brain, and the British study on why girls should eat pork and beans for breakfast. The latter is almost as good as the study on the best way to dunk a cookie, but then you've already heard that one.

If you have stories of your own you'd like to see here, feel free to e-mail me at massie@massie.com.

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

SATURDAY special

Editor Nestor U. Torre
Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

STEWART, left, and Baker, right, with "Calendar Girls" star Julie Walters. AP

Older women finally given more screen time

LOS ANGELES—Diane Keaton recalls her skepticism over lunch a few years back with writer-director Nancy Meyers, who was pitching a romantic comedy centered on a woman in her 50s and a man in his 60s.

"I just sat there and thought, 'Good luck,'" said Keaton, who figured no studio would back a romance that was not about sweet young twenty- or thirtysomethings.

Playwright

Yet youth-minded Hollywood has produced Meyers' "Something's Gotta Give," starring Keaton as a 55-year-old playwright wooed by both a 63-year-old womanizer (Jack Nicholson) and a doctor in his 30s (Keanu Reeves). It debuted in the United States at No. 1.

The season of the older woman didn't end there. Opening last Friday was "Calendar Girls," an ensemble comedy featuring Helen Mirren and Julie Walters in the real-life story of a group of British women in their 40s, 50s and 60s who posed naked for a calendar to raise charity money.

The numbers bear Walters out, though it's still not a pretty picture for actresses, who tend to get relegated to roles as dull moms or kooky aunts as they get into their 40s and 50s.

Surveys

Annual surveys by the Screen Actors Guild found that women 40 and older landed 11 percent of all movie and television roles in 2002, a figure that has crept up gradually from 9 percent in the early 1990s. Men 40 and older grabbed 26 percent of all roles cast in 2002.

Male actors also have a longer shelf life for lead roles—with a few exceptions, such as Meryl Streep, who has continued to find meaty leads into her 50s.

Meantime, actors such as Nicholson, Robert De Niro, Robert Redford, Clint Eastwood, and Sean Connery have managed to score choice lead parts into their 60s and beyond.

"Men definitely have a longer run. They don't have an expiration date," said "Something's Gotta Give" creator Meyers.

Another aspect

Meyers' movie also turns the tables on another aspect of Hollywood ageism—pairing actors in their 50s or 60s romantically with women 20 years younger.

"It's hopeful for everyone because it doesn't carry that stupid cliche, the idea of older men just wanting (to have sex with) younger women," Keaton said.

While "Something's Gotta Give" salutes older women, "Calendar Girls" idolizes them. Set in Yorkshire, England, the film's heart and soul is summed up in an exchange between Walters' character and her terminally ill husband, who tells her, "The flowers of Yorkshire are like its women. The last stage of their growth is the most glorious."

Similar sentiment

Real-life calendar girl Angela Baker, 58, the basis for Walters' character, said her late husband, John, often shared a similar sentiment.

Baker's pal, Tricia Stewart, the basis for Mirren's character, dreamed up the nude calendar in 1999 to raise money for a local hospital where John Baker died of leukemia.

The women hoped to sell a few thousand calendars. Instead, they became an international sensation, grabbing headlines and peddling almost 300,000 calendars, raising about $1 million for leukemia research.

Walters said, "There's a lot more women now in films, more women writing and producing, so women's stories are becoming slightly more common. Social change takes a long time, doesn't it? But it *is* happening!" *AP*

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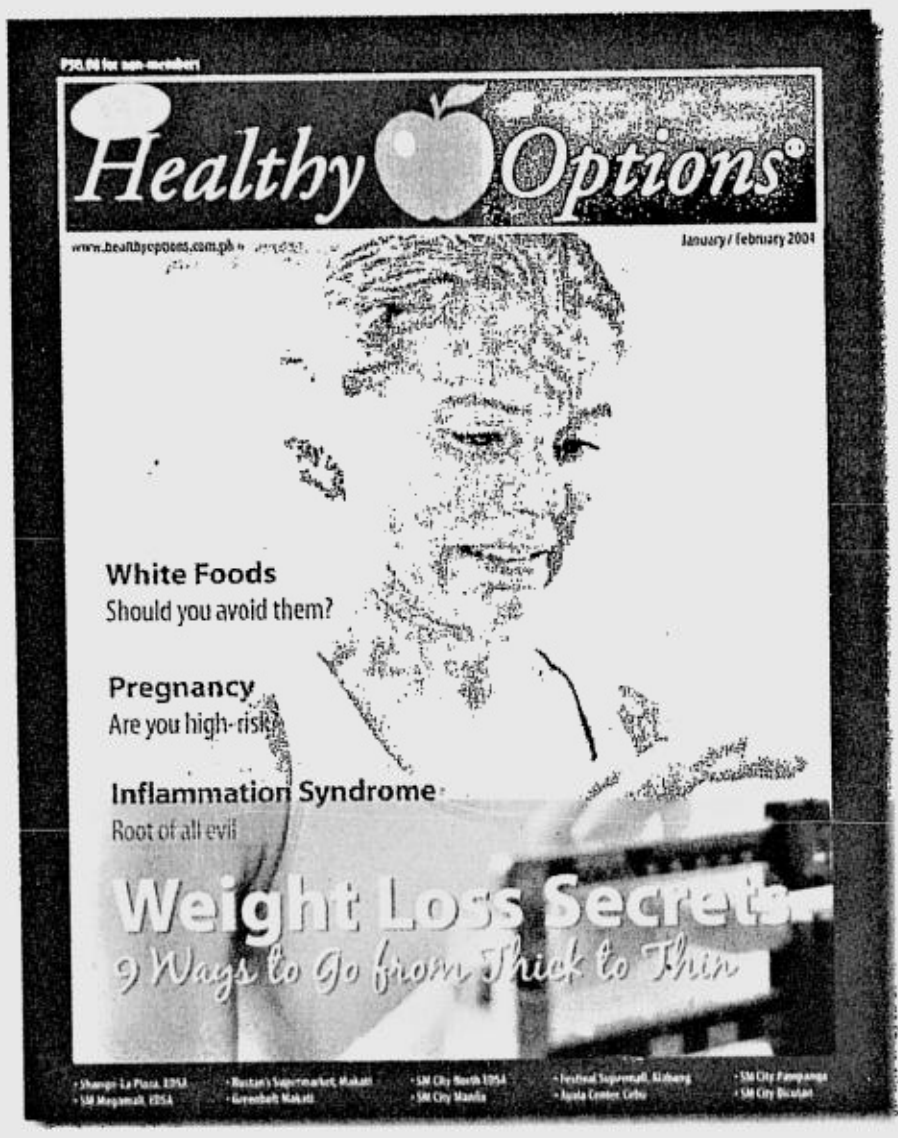

What's Inside :
- The Inflammation Syndrome: Root of all Evil?
  Experts now believe there's a common culprit behind our most deadly diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.
- The Anti-Inflammation Diet
  The best defense is right on your dinner plate-and may be the only diet you'll ever need.
- Pregnancy: Are you High-Risk?
  Here's a look at five of the most common risks and what you should know to keep yourself and your baby healthy from conception to delivery.
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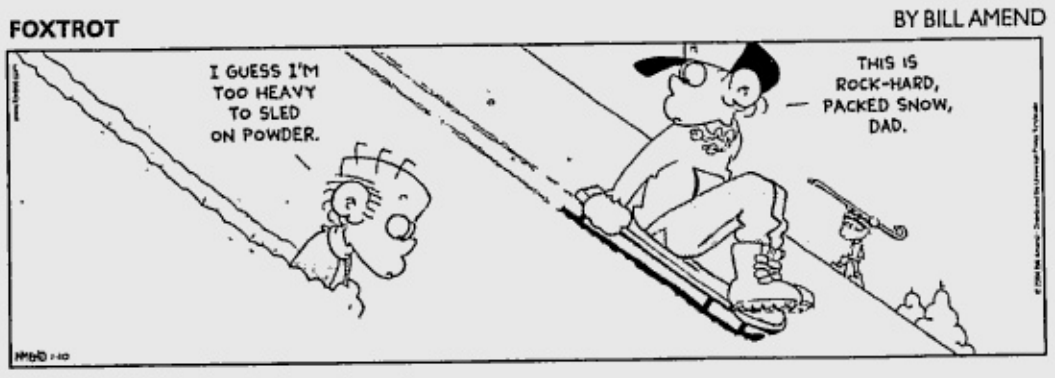
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND



A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

May book signing po uli ako para sa Dial-Saisi-Pugad Baboy 16 sa Powerbooks Greenbelt ngayon, January 10, starting 4 pm—pmjr.

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BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are both realistic and dramatic. This makes you a powerful communicator. When you speak, others listen! You mean what you say and you say what you mean. You have a natural authority and often rise to positions of leadership. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life! Go after what you want.
Birthdate of: Rod Stewart, singer; Ronnie Hawkins, country singer; Jim Croce, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Give thought to how you can make a better impression on others. You are in the public eye more than usual now. Dress your best, because first impressions are so important—and lasting!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Do something a bit different from your normal routine today. Visit bookshops, museums, galleries and different stores. Take a short trip if you can. You need to broaden your horizons!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's so easy to ignore boring, red-tape details connected with insurance, taxes, debt and inheritances. Don't let these things get away from you. Work to stay on top of your scene.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Conversations with someone close to you can reveal something new about yourself to you. It's as if you were looking into a secret mirror.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Set aside a few hours today to get better organized at home or at work. If you reduce the clutter around you, you'll be surprised by how much your efficiency improves.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): No matter how old you are, your creative urges are still within you like they were when you were a child. Do something today to express these creative urges. It's the process that counts, not the product.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Pay extra attention to home and family needs today. After all, family is the rock of your foundation. Your home and your personal environment are very important to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with siblings are significant today. Perhaps someone has something important to tell you. Make sure you listen with a sympathetic ear.

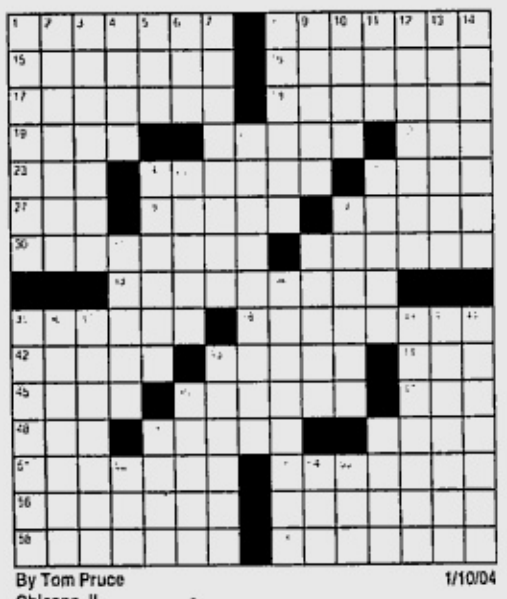
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're considering purchasing something that you ultimately want to show off. You want to improve your self-image now. (That's just fine.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Because this is your time in the Sun, it means it's your time to reenergize yourself for the rest of the year. It's appropriate to put yourself first now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You've been busy talking to friends lately (definitely your style). Try to get some solitude and time alone so that you can sort matters out in your mind.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Talk to a friend about your hopes and dreams for the future. Often, two heads are better than one. Get feedback from others.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

1/10/04

ACROSS
1 Colorful pets
8 Airplane safety machines
15 Absent with permission
16 Having no fixed direction
17 Gadded in London
18 "Adam and Eve" artist Lucas
19 Barflies
20 Stage frontage
22 Guy's date
23 __ had it!
24 "A Doll's House" star Janet
26 Leander's lover
27 Spherical vegetable
28 Empress of Byzantium
29 Wades across shallows
30 Cozy state
32 Little gray-green birds
33 Joyful states
35 Act parts
38 Stockpiles
42 Spelunker's milieu
43 Sank (a putt)
44 Torrid
45 Galena and cuprite
46 Blushes
47 Period
48 Samovar
49 Director Polanski
50 Smoke and fog
51 Lofty emotional state
53 Grill
56 Wider in scope
57 Sculptor Rodin
58 Profit makers
59 Trumpet-shaped protozoan

DOWN
1 Busybodies
2 Like thread before becoming cloth
3 Relatively stable level
4 Holding areas
5 McKellen of "The Lord of the Rings"
6 Threshold
7 Most composed
8 Court judgment
9 Misprint
10 Neighbor of Iraq
11 Is qualified to
12 Bric-a-brac shelves
13 Actor Montalban
14 German castle
21 Florida panhandle city
24 Euphemizes
25 Salad green
26 Buttermilk or Trigger
29 Meadows
31 Sarazen and Wilder
32 Even more despicable
34 Provided that
35 Chastise severely
36 Italian white marble
37 Zero in golf
39 British pharmacy
40 Ontario city
41 Reel
43 Four-baggers
46 Kitchen gadget
49 Contumelious
50 Floor
52 Station from Tenn.
54 Furrow
55 __ of consent

Friday's Puzzle Solved

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1/10/04

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

KIKO MACHINE

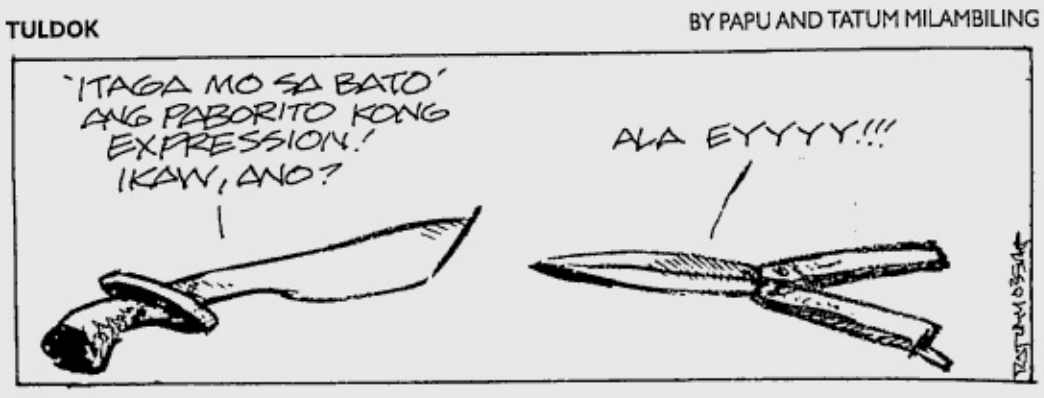
BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



Snooky Serna returns to her first love

SERNA. Doesn't mind playing mother roles.

By Jocelyn Valle

SNOOKY Serna, who's only in her late 30s, doesn't mind playing mother roles. For instance, in the fantasy movie, "Captain Barbell" (she had to put on darker make-up to appear old enough to be Ogie Alcasid's parent), in the old soap opera, "Habang Kapiling Ka" and in a yet-to-be-shown *teleserye* starring Claudine Barretto.

Scheming mama

She should have been Jericho Rosales' scheming mama, Madame Claudia Buenavista, in the ground-breaking soap opera, "Pangako sa 'Yo," but she was still tied up then with IBC-13, where she delivered the news and hosted the magazine show, "Travel and Trade."

"It's flattering," remarks the former child star of the roles she's been getting these days. "Modesty aside, *hindi naman kasi ako mukhang matanda.* I feel good when people tell me that I look too young to play mother roles. And I find it challenging to make people believe that I'm the mother of a 26-year-old (Claudine's age)."

Daughter

The downside, however, says Snooky, is seeing her daughters with husband Ricardo Cepeda (Sam, 10, and Sachi Sophia, 7), getting jealous of her onscreen babies.

Snooky proudly shares that both Sam and Sophia are doing excellently in school (Integrated Montessori at Fort Bonifacio). "I don't want them to enter show business yet," she points out. "Maybe, when they reach the age of KC (Concepcion, who was already in her teens when she started doing commercials)."

After "Captain Barbell," Snooky hopes to do more movies. She was disappointed when the reunion project of Nora Aunor and director Elwood Perez, which was rejected as an entry to last year's Metro Manila Film Festival, was scrapped.

Important character

She was supposed to play an important character in that movie.

"But God is really good," she smiles. "I became part of 'Captain Barbell' and now a show on ABS-CBN."

Snooky happily vows that she won't leave show business again: "Although I enjoyed the experience of newscasting, my heart is still in show business. *Ito ang* first love *ko. Ito ang kinalakihan ko.* My vocation is to entertain people!"

'Magsimula Ka' CCP outreach tour starts on Jan. 27

By Nestor U. Torre

"MAGSIMULA Ka," by Gines Tan, first became popular and critically-acclaimed in the '80s and was lauded as "the first Filipino stage musical that works."

It remains popular to this day because it follows the story of three friends who dream of coming up with a prizewinning song, despite the vigorous opposition they face from parents and other people who want them to settle for more "practical" careers.

Personal conflicts

The three graduates persevere, however, and ultimately compete in a national songwriting competition. Before they are able to do that, however, they have to contend with and resolve a number of personal conflicts and issues.

These conflicts are what many other young people have to deal with these days, so the musical enjoys great empathy with young viewers. Older people can also relate to the show because of its strong family orientation.

The musical's dramatic scenes are cleverly counterpointed by riotous comedy sequences involving the young graduates and some househelp, who also turn out to have their own dreams for the future.

This combination of drama and comedy scenes makes "Magsimula Ka" a hit with all audiences, as its more than 150 performances to date convincingly attest.

In addition, the lyrics and music of Gines Tan (with arrangements by Ryan Cayabyab) captivate members of the audience with their entertaining, moving and inspiring qualities. Some numbers are danced as well as sung, and this adds yet another dimension to the musical's prismatic appeal.

The production has the dynamism and versatility that are some of the hallmarks of the authentic stage musical. And the performances of the show's gifted cast of actors, singers and dancers add verve and excitement to the production as a whole.

Outstanding elements

All of these outstanding elements have made "Magsimula Ka" a well-loved hit, resulting in its being staged every few years with new cast members, many of whom sequentially go on to enjoy successful careers in entertainment.

For 2004, "Magsimula Ka" is being staged anew starting on Jan. 27 at the University of the East to raise funds for important artistic projects of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

We hope that you will support the CCP by sponsoring an outreach performance of Tan's acclaimed musical in your school, parish, office or organization. Please call Tatchie Ignacio or Sonny Cristobal at CCP Outreach (833-0267/ 832-3674) or Andy Bais at 713-9323 and 0919 206-5424.

Resolutions for a much better 2004

By Behn Cervantes

ALONG with good wishes meant for one and all during the Christmas season are the inevitable New Year's resolutions we make that we hope will augur a better future. We look back at our performance in the past year with an emotionally objective 20-20 vision and quickly admit our human weaknesses. There is, indeed, room for improvement.

Second chance

Thus, people give themselves a second chance—year after year after year!

Jesse Alunan, who works for a shipping company in Cebu, hopes for a more loving relationship within his family circle. He says, "I resolve to do much better so that my application for the company car plan will be approved."

Sam Yrastorza, a young urologist from Ormoc, Leyte and a Born-Again Christian, resolves to "become the tool of good that the Almighty designed me to be."

Once he has achieved his goal to change himself, he will help others to attain the same state of grace.

Good health

Yaying Dragon, a stylish matron from Cotabato, wishes that everyone will value the benefits of good health.

Nanding Josef, Artistic Director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, resolves to do "more artistic projects—acting, directing, training and, if possible, have less managerial assignments." This resolution appears like the Christmas wish of an artist caught between aspirations for creativity and the burdens of bureaucratic responsibilities.

GOMEZ. Resolves to be more gentle in dealing with others.

Rean Sy, a young lawyer from Iloilo City, wants to help stop his father's chain-smoking. He also wishes that the Filipino voting populace would resolve to understand national issues and empower itself to install a qualified president this coming elections.

Rosario Vicenta Juan of Cebu wants to help others "serve the Lord in everything they do." Jake Marques resolves to "stop worrying about things" he can't do anything about, and to "eliminate entertaining the anticipatory anxiety" that often gets him all a-dither.

Feminist

Former beauty queen, feminist and activist Maita Gomez resolves "to be more gentle in dealing with others."

I resolve to do the same, but above all, I will consciously appreciate the love of my family and treasure more the fidelity of dear friends. Yes, this year I will make more friends, but will work hardest to keep my old ones.

Let 2004 be the Year of Friendship!

TRIVIAL PURSUITS

Mel Gibson's practical jokes and other fun facts

By Rito P. Asilo

"THE ROLE of Hamlet is said to be considered 'unlucky' when it comes to winning the Tony (the theater Oscars). Did anyone ever win for Hamlet?"

Answer: Of the roughly one dozen actors who've played Hamlet on Broadway, Ralph Fiennes, 41, is the first and only actor to win a Tony Award for playing the Bard's popular character.

Material stage thespian

"Before Madonna's hit stage turn as the ambitious art dealer in the West End's 'Up For Grabs,' did she appear in any stage production?"

Madonna was in several plays. She appeared in David Mamet's "Speed-the-Plow," with Joe Mantegna in 1988. Early in her career, she acted in a filmed stage play, "In Artificial Light" (1980), for which she wrote her own part. In 1986, she starred in "Goose & Tomtom" with then-husband Sean Penn.

Prank specialist

"What sort of practical jokes has Mel Gibson pulled on his co-stars?"

During the filming of "Conspiracy Theory," Gibson made Julia Roberts erupt in hysterical screams when he gave her a gift-wrapped freeze-dried rat—his specialty!

He is known to play similar "remorseless" pranks on his other co-stars. During the filming of "What Women Want," Helen got so terrified of falling victim to Gibson's practical jokes that she got down on her knees and begged him to spare her! She told him, "Please, I'm the wrong person for this!" She was amazed to find that it worked.

But the inveterate prankster turned his sights on director Nancy Meyer by planting the feared freeze-dried rodent next to her drink!

GIBSON. Gifts his victims with a rodent!

David Bowie's 'Reality' has revivifying sheen

By Noelani Torre

"I'M SCREAMING that I'm gonna be living on till the end of time," sings David Bowie in his newest album, "Reality" (ISO/ Columbia). "And I'm never ever gonna get. . ./ And I'm never ever gonna get old."

If it were any other artist, such sentiments wouldn't carry much weight, but this is David Bowie, the "Chameleon of Pop" himself, with 25 albums and more than 30 years of music-making experience behind him.

26th album

"Reality" is the thin white duke's 26th album, and it holds its own when compared to last year's highly successful "Heathen." If the latter rescued his star from fading into obscurity, the former gives it a revivifying sheen that makes his "never gonna get old" line easy to believe.

Another shift

This album, along with "Heathen," marks yet another shift in the mercurial Bowie's famed quicksilver style. This time, the change is brought on by age and recent events, like the 9/11 attacks (the singer lives near Ground Zero).

The album is imbued with a maturity that grounds even its most surreal moments—this doesn't mean that he's getting old, mind you, far from it. What it is, is a sign of growth. Bowie is one of those blessed few musicians who, despite a few slip-ups, always manage to sound fresh.

(To be concluded)

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM JAN. 10 - JAN. 16

CH									
	6:00 Star in A Million 6:30 Magandang Gabi Bayan 8:30 Home Along da Airport 9:00 Victim 9:30 Buttercup 10:30 Kontrobersyal 11:30 "F" 12:00 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Concert at the Park 7:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 8:00 Search for the 1st Tanduay Billiards Player 9:00 Cardiff Wales World Pool Championship 2003	7:00 Sailormoon Sailor Stars 7:30 Mirror, Mirror 8:00 Wow Mali! 9:00 Viva Box Office *Sana'y Ikaw na Nga* 11:00 The New Adventures of Robinhood	6:00 Search for a Star 7:00 Imbestigador 8:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 9:30 Kakabakaba Adventures 10:30 Celebrity Turns 11:30 Flash Report 12:00 Master Showman	6:00 Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo 7:00 7 Days 8:00 John Doe 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11:00 PGMA	5:00 National Basketball League 8:00 Japan Video Topics 9:00 Carols from Many Land 10:00 Tinapay ng Buhay 11:00 Iyo ang Katarungan	6:00 Baywatch 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 The Amazing Race 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deel	6:00 Agila Reports 6:30 Screen Savers 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Car Guys 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras Ng Kalolohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Tanging Ina 9:30 Sunday Family Cinema 11:30 Dong Puno Tonight 12:00 The Weekend News	9:00 Go For Gold 11:00 Unlimited Diving	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Geyferd 7:00 Ispup atpb. 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 Viva Cine Idols *Sarah Balabagan Story* 11:00 Speed	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 K! 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Smack Down Wrestling 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 May Puso ang Batas 9:00 Sunday's Big Event 11:00 A Second Look	7:00 2003 Worldpool Master 9:00 Sinemaks 11:00 Driven Show 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Jimmy Neutron 6:30 Futurama 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Yes Dear 8:30 Spin City 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The Bachelor 10:30 Digital Tour	6:00 Captured 6:30 Fresh Gear 7:00 Convergence 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 New Yankee Workshop 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Ang Iglesia ni Cristo	7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night movies
	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Next Level Na, Game K N B? 7:30 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:00 Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas 8:30 It Might Be You 9:00 OK Fine! Whatever 11:00 Insider 11:30 The Correspondents	6:00 Concert at the Park 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 Family Rosary Crusade	6:00 F 6:30 Balitang-Balita 7:00 Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Thai 70s Show 9:00 On Air 9:30 Misadventures of Maverick and Ariel 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Mad TV	6:15 Frontpage 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:30 Twin Hearts 8:00 Endless Love II 8:30 Starstruck 9:00 Nanlo Ang Puso Ko 9:30 Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita 11:00 Saksi 11:30 I-Witness	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 Just for Laffs 8:00 Jag 9:00 The Agency 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City 11:00 OPTV	7:00 NBA 9:30 In This Corner 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 Lunsonn Natin	6:00 Beast Machines 6:30 Godzilla 7:00 Batman 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Birds of Prey 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Convergence 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Kalolohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan
	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Next Level Na, Game K N B? 7:30 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:00 Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas 8:30 It Might Be You 9:00 Bida Si Mister, Bida Si Misis 11:00 Insider 11:30 Pipol	6:00 Paco Park Presents 7:00 Family Rosary Crusade 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 Wow Philippines 11:00 Auto Focus	6:00 2 Years Vacation w/ Dinosaurs 6:30 Balitang-Balita 7:00 Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Campus TV 9:00 E.R 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Wedding Works 11:00 Bugs	6:15 Frontpage 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:30 Twin Hearts 8:00 Endless Love II 8:30 Starstruck 9:00 Nanlo Ang Puso Ko 9:30 All Together Now 11:00 Saksi 11:30 I-Witness	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 Ed 8:00 Ally McBeal 9:00 Single Girls 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sports in Focus 11:00 RTV, Our Rhythm, Our Reality	7:00 2003 Worldpool Master 9:00 Entrepreneur 10:00 Travel 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 Up Close and Personal 11:30 Action Express	6:00 Beast Machines 6:30 Godzilla 7:00 Batman 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Dawson's Creek 9:00 Smallville 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Twilight Zone	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Screen Savers Edit A 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Kalolohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan
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	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Next Level Na, Game K N B? 7:30 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:00 Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas 8:30 It Might Be You 9:00 Maalala Mo Kaya 11:00 Insider 11:30 Dong Puno Live	5:00 Asian Boxing Championship 7:00 Ugnayan Pambansa 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 The Working President 11:00 Unlimited Diving	6:00 Dragon League 6:30 Balitang-Balita 7:00 Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Guinness World Records 9:30 Working 10:00 The Big News 10:30 By Request	6:15 Frontpage 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:30 Twin Hearts 8:00 Endless Love II 8:30 Starstruck 9:00 Nanlo Ang Puso Ko 9:30 Magpakailanman 11:00 Saksi 11:30 Debate	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 Baby Bob 7:30 Sabrina 8:00 Felicity 9:00 Crossing Jordan 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Hidden Hills 11:00 Police Hour	6:00 Game Channel 7:00 NBA 9:30 CelebrityDatCom 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 Opinyon at Desisyon	6:00 Beast Machines 6:30 Godzilla 7:00 Batman 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Barkada Nights 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Twilight Zone	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Screen Savers Edit B 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Kalolohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:30 Q Showcase
	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Next Level Na, Game K N B? 7:30 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:00 Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas 8:30 It Might Be You 9:00 Star Cinema Presents 11:00 Insider 11:30 Private I	6:00 Value Vision 7:00 Asian Boxing Championship 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 The Working President 11:00 Family Rosary Crusade	6:00 Fancy Lala 6:30 Balitang-Balita 7:00 Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:00 The Big Night 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Friday Box Office	6:15 Frontpage 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:30 Twin Hearts 8:00 Endless Love II 8:30 Starstruck 9:00 Nanlo Ang Puso Ko 9:30 Bubble Gang 11:00 Saksi 11:30 Emergency	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 The Pretender 8:00 Just for Laffs 8:30 Dharma & Greg 9:00 Dead Zone 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 TV Greats on Friday	10:00 MTV 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 GMA The Working President	6:00 Beast Machines 6:30 Godzilla 7:00 X-Men 7:30 Justice League 8:00 Thieves 9:00 The X-Files 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Twilight Zone	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Auto Motor and Sports 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 The Message	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Kalolohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan

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SATURDAY Special

Top directors dote on Leonardo DiCaprio

SHOW BIZ Q&A

Rito P. Asilo

FROM Marilise Tabanag of Quezon City: **"How did Leonardo DiCaprio get his name? In what movies will I see him next?"**

Leo's pregnant mom was standing in front of a Da Vinci painting in Italy when her son "kicked" from inside. This prompted her to name him after the painter of the "Mona Lisa."

Auteurs

DiCaprio's projects are always eagerly anticipated because Hollywood's top directors want him for their projects. His most recent movies after James Cameron's all-time box-office winner, "Titanic," were directed by the industry's top auteurs: Steven Spielberg ("Catch Me If You Can"); Martin Scorsese ("Gangs of New York") and Woody Allen ("Celebrity").

He reteams with Scorsese ("The Aviator") and his "Romeo and Juliet" director Baz Luhrmann ("Alexander The Great") later this year. He will also topbill Robert De Niro's "The Good Shepherd" as James Wilson, one of the CIA's founding members.

DI CAPRIO. Named after the painter.

WON. First acted in commercials.

Korean telenovela

From Levie Anafe of West Rembo, Makati: **"Where can I write the actor who played 'Andrew' on GMA's Korean telenovela, 'Endless Love'? Please tell us more about him."**

His real name is Kim Do Jin, born Sept. 29, 1977. The 5'9" South Korean actor who played the rich guy, Andrew/Taesuk, who fell for Jenny/Eunsoo (Song Hui Qias) in "Endless Love" appeared in commercials before hitting it big as an actor. He is more popularly known to his legions of Asian followers as Won Bin.

"Endless Love," originally called "A Tale of Autumn" but re-titled when it premiered in Taiwan, was Seoul's most popular television series in 2000. He starred with Kyoko Fukuda in his most recent TV series, "Friends."

Late last year, Won Bin's fans were saddened when it was announced that he will serve in his country's military force for two years after he wraps up shooting for his film, "My Elder Brother," in February next year.

Try writing the Korean Broadcasting System at No. 18 Yoido-dong, Youngdungpo-goo, Seoul, South Korea 150-790. Or e-mail pr@www.kbs.co.kr for more info about him.

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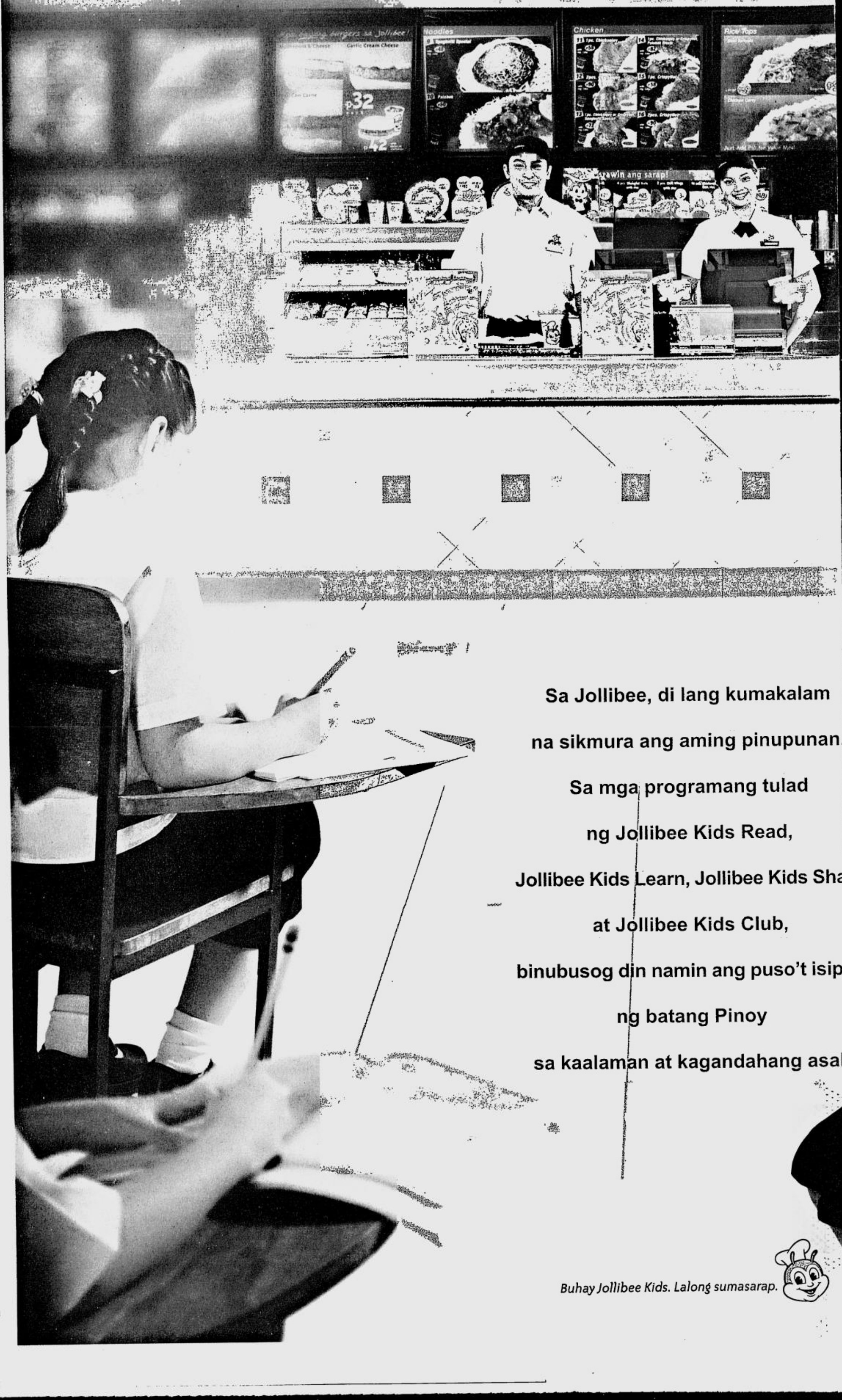


Sa Jollibee, di lang kumakalam

na sikmura ang aming pinupunan.

Sa mga programang tulad

ng Jollibee Kids Read,

Jollibee Kids Learn, Jollibee Kids Sha

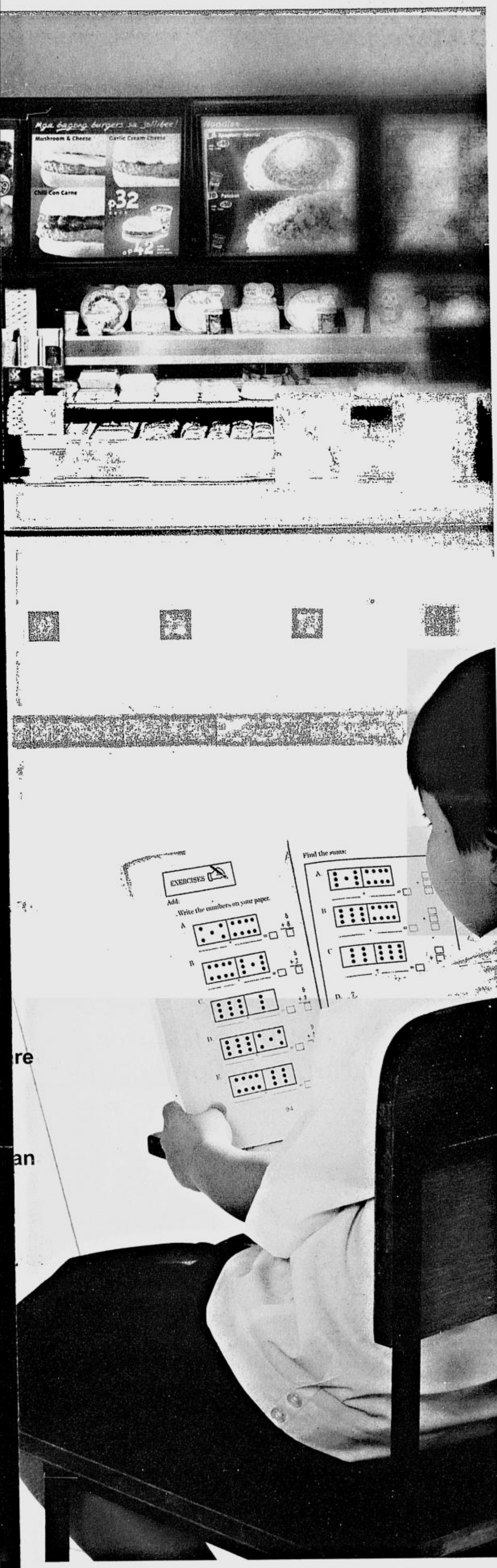
at Jollibee Kids Club,

binubusog din namin ang puso't isip

ng batang Pinoy

sa kaalaman at kagandahang asal

Buhay Jollibee Kids. Lalong sumasarap.



2003 YEARBOOK

Isang taong busog sa saya't sorpresa ang batang Pinoy

Jolly EsKWELA

Hangarin ng Jollibee na lumaking magalang, mapagmalasakit at mapagmahal sa bansa ang bawat bata. Kaya't kasama ang Department of Education - NCR at Mary Lindbert, inilunsad nito ang proyektong "Ang Batang Pinoy ay Jollibee Kid" - isang malawakang values education program para sa Grade 1 at Grade 2. Sa pamamagitan ng values-integrated curriculum, unti-unting binabalik ng Jollibee ang magandang kaugalian sa puso't isipan ng mga kabataan.

"Wow! Ang galing!" Sa Changing Times Exhibit sa Festival Mall, na proyekto din ng Jollibee at DepEd, iyan ang maririnig sa mga cute na chikiting na nakaranas maging crew sa mini store module ng Jollibee. Bukod sa nalaman nila kung paano ihanda ang kanilang paboritong Yum at Chicken Joy, marami rin silang natutunan sa mga hi-tech educational tools na lalo pang nagpasarap sa kanilang pag-aaral.

Abakada Barkada

Naniniwala ang Jollibee na "Sa bawat aklat na binubuksan, malayong mundo nararating ng isipan". Kaya sa tulong ng DepEd at SAS (Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation), pinangunahan nito ang isang malawakang reading campaign sa Grade 4 public school students ng Makati, Pampanga at Bulacan. Dito ay mahigit-kumulang na 13,000 na mga bata ang nakinabang sa 18,000 na bagong libro at matiyagang pagtuturo ng mga 300 na guro. Mayroon ding Reading Corner na hinandog ang Jollibee para lalo pang mapalawak ang kanilang kaalaman at mapagbuti ang iba pa nilang talento.

Mas MaAga ang Pasko sa Jollibee

Unang sinimulan ni Aga Muhlach, sa hangarin na mapasaya ang mga batang nangangailangan tuwing Pasko, ang taunang proyektong ito ay ang pinakamatagal at pinaka-matagumpay na programa ng Jollibee Kids. Taun-taon mahigit 75,000 na libro't laruan ang natatanggap ng Jollibee kaya mas maraming bata ang natutulungan nito. Higit pa sa pagbibigay-saya, hangarin ng programa na mabigyang pag-asa at katuparan ang mga pangarap ng mga batang kapus-palad.

JOLLIBarkada

Pagkakaibigan, pakikisama, pakikipaglaro. Sarap, saya, sorpresa. Huling-huli ng Jollibee ang kiliti ng batang Pinoy. Kaya naman at home talaga sila sa Jollibee Kids Club. Di lamang puro laro, nahuhubog din dito ang pagkakaisa, pakikipagkapwa at tiwala sa sarili. At isang masaya at makabuluhang barkadahang malapit sa puso ng batang Pinoy.

Mas marami pang masasayang pakulo ang naghihintay sa mga Jollibee Kids sa 2004! Para sa karagdagang impormasyon, bumisita sa www.jollibee.com.ph o pumasyal sa Jollibee.

'Bridal Shower' captures complexities of modern-day love and romance

By Ronald G. Mangubat

FOR sometime now, Seiko Films' Robbie Tan has been telling his colleagues that he would be making a radical business shift by producing quality films. He likewise vowed to make an extra effort to cut back on the sleaze.

Intelligent sex comedy

In his latest film offering, Jeffrey Jeturian's "Bridal Shower," Tan finally succeeds in coming up with an intelligent sex comedy. The movie takes a look into the lives of three women desperately seeking love and romance.

"Bridal Shower" tells the story of Tates (Dina Bonnevie), Katie (Cherry Pie Picache) and Sonia (Francine Prieto), who work in an advertising agency. They yearn for the men of their dreams. Tates finds hers in Mickey (Christian Vazquez) who is still smarting from the wounds of his broken marriage and is afraid of commitment. Tates is desperate to win her man.

Katie is an insecure obese woman who hopes to find her Prince Charming in cyberspace, only to be dumped by her chatmate when he meets her. Undaunted, she then falls in love with a *macho* dancer (Alfred Vargas) whose innocent ways and naiveté surprise and captivate her.

Practical reasons

Sonia sleeps with two men of opposite social status. The first one is a sex virtuoso but is a starving artist (Douglas Robinson), the other is a mediocre lay but is filthy rich (Juancho Valentino). When Sonia gets pregnant, she chooses the rich guy for practical reasons.

There are several factors which contribute to the overall hilarity of the movie: the situations in which the main characters get themselves entangled; witty dialogue and punchlines excellently delivered by the actors and the visual techniques employed by Jeturian which add plus points to the film's high humor quotient.

There's just one thing that disturbed us about the movie: how the women use money to win their men, and how the men jump into relationships to iron out financial obligations. For example, Bonnevie's character shoulders the annulment expenses of her boyfriend and uses this as leverage in order to get him to marry her. When she asks for the payment of his debt, Vasquez forgets his doubts and says, "*Pakasal na lang tayo.*"

Plausible

Although these situations are plausible, we couldn't help but wonder if the male characters really loved the women, or were just indebted to them.

Perhaps, this is also one of the things the movie is trying to say—that in these modern and complex times, when material things play a large role in our lives, true love remains elusive.

Julius and Tintin share touching wedding vows

By Nestor U. Torre

THE WEDDING of Julius Babao and Tintin Bersola last Dec. 8 moved many people with its beautiful distillation of friendship, love and commitment. Nowhere were those much-coveted hallmarks more fervently expressed than in the couple's personalized vows, which they read to each other during the nuptial rites.

BABAO AND BERSOLA. Beautiful distillation of friendship, love and commitment.

Emotional edification

They inspired the couple's friends so much that we asked Julius and Tintin to give us copies of their vows for the "emotional edification" of the many people who weren't able to witness their much-talked-about wedding.

Tintin leads off with an emotional honesty so characteristic of her: "My ever-dearest Julius, the moment we have been waiting for has finally come—and with it, so many memories. Remember when you asked me, 'When are we going to give our love a chance?'

"Back then, I had so many questions and fears—but you took all those fears away! And because of your love, I learned to trust.

"You said you saw a future with me. But I knew in my heart that this wasn't just about the future, it was about forever.

Soulmates

"And that Forever, I saw in you. Because we are soulmates!

"We both knew it that afternoon when we danced to our song. The love we felt for each other was so strong that we found ourselves in tears. And our souls became one.

"Julius, I love you so much, and I will spend the rest of my life with you—seeing the world, going on many journeys *together*.

"There is nothing I want more than to grow old with you, and spend the last breath of my life with you beside me.

"When all else is taken away from me, I will find comfort in the thought that I have you to love. I may not have all the things I dream of, but I have love, I have you.

"I love you, Julius. Thank you for loving me."

Of course, Julius couldn't hope to match Tintin's fervent, loving expressiveness, but he responded beautifully in his own way.

His manly declaration of love so delighted a woman seated beside us in church that she pinched her husband and whispered, "Why can't you say such wonderful things about *me*?" And she didn't un-pinch him until he promised to pen a similarly loving missive to her that night.

Best times

Here is Julius' vow for other, less articulate gents to adapt or paraphrase for their own wives or sweethearts: "Dearest Tintin, I am so happy! At last, there is no longer you and I, but us.

"I always knew we would end up together, although the road wasn't always smooth. But I only remember the good times—the best times of my life!

"I am marrying you, Tintin, because I refuse to end those moments. And I know that we will have more wonderful moments, not only as a couple, but also as a *family*. I commit myself to you in the presence of our families, friends, and most of all, the Lord Almighty.

"I love you because you make me laugh. You also make me cry—but because of the kindness of your heart, your selflessness, and your eagerness to help those who are in need. And this trait I want our children to have.

"But most of all, I love you because you are here with me, on the most special day of our lives. I pray that our Father will continue to guide our relationship.

"The Lord has showered me with the best gifts that anyone could get. But you are the greatest of them all—by far. Tintin, I love you with all my heart. I can't wait to share my life with you!"

OK, you guys, that's the standard to aim for. Now, make your sweethearts happy!

It's Fiesta del Santo Niño again!

ONE of the most awaited events everytime January comes around is the Fiesta del Santo Niño.

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

Members of the Congregacion del Santisimo Nombre del Niño Jesus say that their lives have changed for the better due to their devotion to the Santo Niño.

Closer

Designer Steve de Leon joined the Congregacion last year and has since seen positive things happening in his life. "I became happier. I used to be detached from a lot of people, like my parents. Now, we're closer than ever!," he reveals.

Donnie Delima often brings marketing man Deo Pamilar to antique shops. One particular visit changed his life.

PAMILAR. Chance meeting with the Santo Niño changed his life.

"I was on my way to the stockroom and midway up the stairs, there was this Santo Niño facing me. There were many Santo Niños facing the same direction, but *this* one was facing me. I went to get something in the car. When I went back to the stockroom again, *that* Santo Niño was no longer looking at me, but was facing the same direction as the others. I asked if somebody had moved it, but the storekeeper said nobody else was in the room but me," he recalls.

The Fiesta del Santo Niño will be held from Jan. 12 to 25.

Schedule: Jan. 12-14, 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., registration at the PNB Long Gallery area, third floor. (Ingress of Images); Jan. 15, formal opening and blessing of the Santo Niño images;

Jan. 16-23, 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., exhibit viewing hours; Jan. 24, pullout of images 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with a mass at 7 p.m.; Jan. 25 (Sunday), at 3 p.m., formation of participating *carrozas* for the Grand Procession from Philtrade to Luneta Grandstand.

Call Daisy Reyes at 525-9126 to 32 local 18; Nolie Hans at 525-4773, 523-5102; Ben Farrales at 525-3421 and 524-8439.

Photoworkshop

The three-day sessions in our Photoworkshop include hands-on exercises and critique, on Jan. 10, 17 and 24; Feb. 7, 21 and 22 and Mar. 6, 13 and 20, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Suite 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia st. (formerly Reposo st.), Bel-Air II, Makati City, with guest lecturer David Hanson. Call 896-3208 or 899-1767 or e-mail mandynavaseropro@yahoo.com.

Chiropractic healings

A FRIEND of mine sent three of her kids to the chiropractor for a check-up. Two of them were found to have spinal misalignments. The daughter's problem resulted in her having one leg longer than the other. The older boy, on the other hand, was adopting a hunched posture when walking and sitting.

Therapeutic exercises

Both children were given chiropractic treatments, taught therapeutic exercises and tutored on how to walk and sit properly.

Although the kids had not experienced pain or abnormal symptoms, the early check-up prevented greater damage.

Spinal problems can cause numerous burdens for the body. Remember that the spine acts like a switchboard through which many functions and actions of the body go. Interference of normal movement and positioning of the spine can affect other body parts.

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Cause

The book, "Alternative Medicine," expounds on cases in which spinal misalignment proved to be the cause of bladder infections, gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory and cardiac conditions, high blood pressure, and even speech impairments. Here is one case described in the book:

"Dr. Davis recounts how a woman came to him suffering from shortness of breath, heart palpitations, fatigue, depression, and sharp pains radiating from her arm. He ascertained that the patient's problems were not related to her heart, as spinal palpitation revealed several misalignments of the vertebrae in her upper spine, along with a compensating disrelationship in her neck vertebrae.

Common injury

"He diagnosed her condition as a common injury called cervical or thoracic angina, which can occur when lifting objects over the head or after suffering trauma to the upper back and neck. By using chiropractic adjustment, muscle stimulation, ultrasound and hot packs, Dr. Davis was able to reverse the symptoms." *(To be concluded)*

Email lotuspond108@hotmail.com

Simply delicious

FOR Christmas and New Year meals, the most expensive and delicious dishes are brought out. With the start of the year, a great meal prosperously ushers in a promising 365 days.

Different

At home, we would have roast beef, pan fried goose liver, turkey or some kind of flamboyant roast. This year was different: We kept it simple.

When Bong, my brother, and I were still single, our bachelor pad served various gimmick meals, like Mongolian and Raclette dinners. Last New Year's Eve, we gathered our closest friends and relatives for jokes and a "*kamayan*" dinner.

Bobby came up with the idea and volunteered his mom, Delia's cooking. We placed banana leaves on the table and prepared good old-fashioned Filipino food.

We had freshly steamed shrimps or *suahe* with spicy soy and sweet vinegar sauce. There was extra lean and crunchy *lechon kawali* with bottles of UFC *lechon* sauce, authentic Ilocano *pinakbet*, *kilawin na* fresh oysters with coriander sauce, *tostadong adobo*, and piping-hot steamed rice.

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

Mixture

For the *tostadong adobo*, I marinated the pork belly or *liempo* with *kasim* or pork shoulder overnight, simmered the mixture until the pork was tender, removed the cover, let the sauce evaporate until the fat came out, and used its oil to fry the pork until it was crunchy and sticky. The oil was drained later.

It didn't turn out quite the way I wanted it, because the shoulder got "*durog*," so we had shreaded *adobo* instead, but everyone loved the meal. I also prepared *bagoong alamang guisado* on the side. I wasn't worried about the fat because I had taken C-lium fibre to absorb and flush it out. Plus, Tita Delia had removed as much oil as she could from the *kawali*.

Meals

The following day, the *lechon* had "regressed" to *lechon paksiw*. The *adobong durog* was even better. Meals like these get better with time!

If you're running out of meal ideas, try this one: Cover your table with banana leaves, dump the rice in the middle, surround it with *inihaw na* whatever, some veggies and crab or shrimp, and have everyone s around and just dig in. *Sarap!*

Hap eating!

For omments email sandydaza@ w.ca

'Travel Time' features pilgrimage to Compostela

ON Jan. 12 at 11:30 p.m., "Travel Time" on Studio 23 visits Spain, focusing on The Way of St. James, a pilgrimage to Spain's most sacred spot, Compostela, the burial place of St. James or Santiago de Compostela.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Program producer-host Susan Calo Medina shares that the pilgrimage has been popular since the Middle Ages. Pilgrims walk from as far away as Paris! A pilgrim receives an official certificate only if he has walked at least 100 kilometers.

The city is dominated by the cathedral, built in the 12th century. At its core, it's Romanesque, with baroque additions. The cathedral is surrounded by four plazas.

One of its sculptures is the Tree of Jesse, and the custom is for pilgrims to insert their fingers into indentations in the leaves and vines. Through the centuries, the indentations have become deeper.

Another age-old custom is for the pilgrim to bow before the kneeling statue of Maestro Mateo, the sculptor who carved the Portico de la Gloria in 1188, and to lean his head on the statue's—in the hope that the artist's genius will rub off on him!

Susan's team stayed at the Parador de los Reyes Catolicos, built in the 1500s by Ferdinand and Isabella as a hospital to care for pilgrims. The *paradors* in Spain are spacious and luxurious, are furnished with antiques, and serve the best cuisine of each region.

MEDINA. Sets her sights on Compostela's famous cathedral (background).

Movies on TV

On HBO, Jan. 10 at 9 a.m., "Who's Harry Crumb?" Jan. 11 at 9:30 p.m., "Hearts in Atlantis." Jan. 12 at 9 a.m., "The Sweetest Thing." Jan. 13 at 2 p.m., "Little Rascals." Jan. 14 at 10:30 a.m., "All the Pretty Horses." Jan. 15 at 4:30 p.m., "Sixteen Candles." Jan. 16 at 1:15 p.m., "The Salton Sea."

On Cinemax: Jan. 10 at 8 a.m., "Heart and Souls." Jan. 11 at 4 p.m., "Lean on Me." Jan. 12 at 12 noon, "Parenthood." Jan. 13 at 10:45 a.m., "Cool Hand Luke." Jan. 14 at 9:30 a.m., "The Three Worlds of Gulliver." Jan. 15 at 10:30 p.m., "Lone Hero." Jan. 16 at 4 p.m., "Pillow Talk."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SuperlCountdown

350 days to Christmas

SATURDAY Super!

E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph

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Special thanks to ANGELIQUE VILLARAZA and EMPHASIS SALON

Election page E3 **entertainment**

Mojo page E2 **yo-yo!**

KC's page E3 **New Year's wish**

Join the page E4 **Shower**

A Super! dictionary

Kaleidosmoke
the cloud of second-hand smoke outside hip establishments around the city of Makati

Chillax
to chill and relax, get it?

Hipatitis
a case of terminal coolness

Super Lolo / Super Lola
Super! readers who belong to the senior set

Testrosexuals
chicks who kick ass, e.g. Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Kelly Hu, Michelle Rodriguez and Eliza Dushku

Roommatism
the science of getting along with perfect strangers in close quarters

Inner *jologs*
the force that the Super! staff summons when coming up with off-kilter captions at ungodly hours. And yes, it's in all of us. To paraphrase Christina Aguilera, "You are jologs no matter what they say..."

***Bagoong* for the soul**
the polar opposite of inspirational maxims, e.g. quotes from Paris Hilton

Face Valium
people who induce drowsiness during conversations

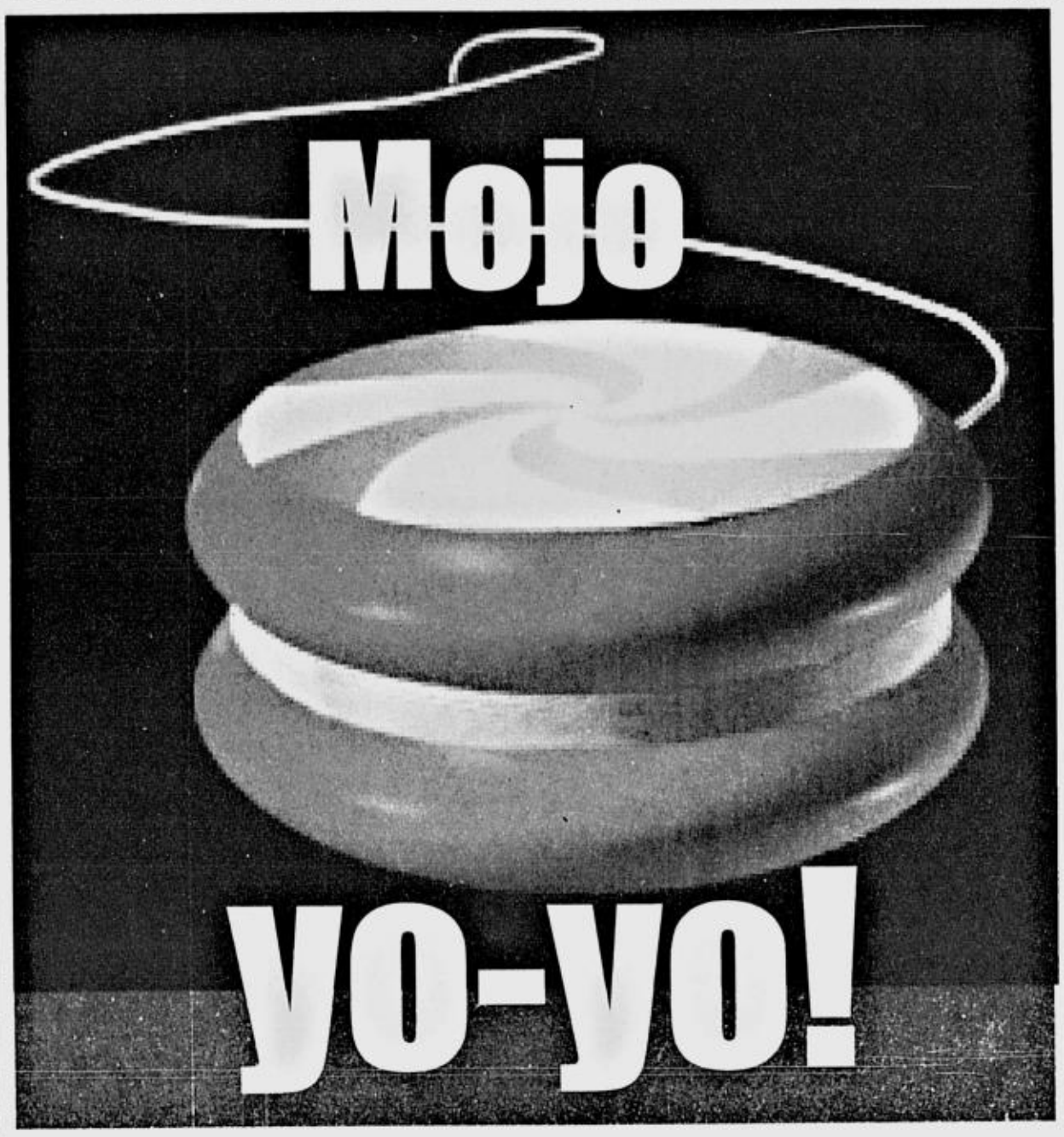
EmptyV
inane chat and text channels on cable television

Booty-ful
someone with a big behind; someone who gets a lot of booty calls

Sirmaam / Maamsir
the new "Dude"

Starnished
fallen or faded celebrities

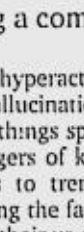
(a) your hip and happy Saturday Special habit; (b) a forward-thinking way of examining pop culture; (c) to go beyond the bland and the boring, e.g. "Super! size it!" "Super! spice it!" "Super!-ize it!"; (d) the ultimate indulgence, without the calories.



To me this uncomplicated toy says it's time to relish simple pleasures, as well as the wisdom of cycles, returns and the need to come back before venturing out again

THE YO-YO is making a comeback.

I thought it was just my hyperactive imagination or holidazed hallucination, seeing the hip little round things spinning up and down the fingers of kids from dingy street corners to trendy restaurants in the city. Seeing the faces of these kids so happy with their yo-yos brought me a sense of nostalgia, bringing me back to my own yo-yo crazed era a long time ago, as a little girl growing up in Manila in the '80s. Back then, Coca-Cola had devised an ingenious marketing tactic by offering yo-yos in exchange for collected soft-drink crowns. The exchange scheme made everyone crazy for yo's; it became a phenomenal hit among children and teenagers. I myself was insanely happy with my own red, classic Coke yo-yo; I learned all the tricks, from walking the dog to rocking the cradle to going 'round the world.



OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

Being the eternal Peter Pan that I am and always will be, I recently bought a green yo-yo that lights up a bright red as it spins out. This was a Christmas present to myself, for a grand total of 19 pesos at a local supermarket. I spent the entire holiday season as a twentysomething dog trying to re-learn old tricks. It amused me how friends—including professional doctors, graphic designers and architects—freaked out when they saw me playing with my new toy like a silly kid. At first I thought they were making fun of me, until they fought over my yo-yo like little children fighting for the last piece of candy, and proceeded to demonstrate the tricks that they themselves learned as kids.

'Yo so vain

A few mornings ago, surrounded by a sarong and board short-clad global community nursing hangovers with strong coffee by the Nigi-Nigi Nu Noos bar in Boracay, I decided to amuse myself by, yes, yes, yo, whipping out my new object of obsession. It prompted a nomadic foreign journalist seated at the bar to comment, "What's with the yo-yo, is it making a comeback?" Apparently not realizing the deep-seated wit in his statement, he proceeded to say, "I see kids everywhere in the province with it. Isn't the yo-yo a Filipino invention?"

Well, not quite, though a Filipino by the name of Pedro Flores was responsible for spreading the doctrine of the yo-yo to the global community.

The yo-yo is actually the second oldest toy in the world, after dolls. Though they weren't called "yo-yo" yet, they were around in Greece as far back as 400 to 500 B.C. (I can only imagine Socrates deep in philosophical discussion with his acolytes, stressing a point with one finger and yo-yoing with another). There are ancient Greek yo-yos made of terra cotta exhibited in museums in Athens. Yo-yos are likewise depicted on the walls of Egyptian temples.

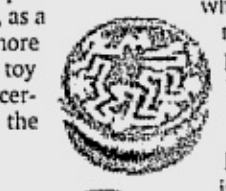
It is pure urban legend that the yo-yo was first used as a weapon (well, perhaps a weapon of mass distraction, as a fellow writer quipped, would be more like it). Yet it *was* in fact a favorite toy for the likes of Napoleon (most certainly a left-handed yo-yoer) and the Duke of Wellington.

Proud Pedro

So where does the Pinoy named Pedro come into the picture, and why are Filipinos always associated with this remarkable, classic toy?

Pedro Flores was a young Filipino who moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1920s, a time when the wooden yo-yo was very popular in the Philippines. Pedro worked as a bellhop at a Santa Monica hotel. During Pedro's lunch breaks, he'd draw an amused crowd at the hotel when he played his yo-yo. Thus, he started his own toy business and called it the Flores Yo-Yo Company. This was the first time the name "yo-yo" was coined. There are several debates among various international yo-yo associations (gotta love them yo-yos!) as to what "yo-yo" really means in Tagalog. Some say it means "spring," and others claim it means "come-come." I, for one, have no clue as to its etymology, though my personal theory is that funky Filipino island kids back in the '20s would say "Joe! Joe!" to curious Caucasians entranced with their exhibitions.

In 1927, Flores teamed up with an American, D.F. Duncan Sr., who saw great potential in marketing the newfangled toy. The fabulous team-up held yo-yo competitions, thus setting off a craze, and it was during this period that all the classic tricks were developed. Yo-yo champs toured the country to teach kids how to carve pictures of palm trees and birds on their wooden yo-yos, which was actually a Filipino pastime back then. Two years later, Flores and Duncan established the Genuine Yo-Yo company, trade-marking the Filipino-coined name, "yo-yo."



There and back again

Today, as we begin a new year with that fabled bang and proceed to forecast future trends and develop ultra-modern inventions, I boldly predict that it will be a year calling back a sense of simplicity and fierce nationalism. It's something I thought about while yo-yoing away—I realized that many of us are obsessed with what 2004 will bring on, what the future beyond holds, what new toys and ultra-modern gadgets, cell phones and Playstations will bedazzle kids from one to 92.

Yet I think my first lesson of the year came just by thinking of the yo-yo's simple structure and employment—a symbol of cycles, returns, the need to look back before venturing out again. For me, happiness is defined by laughter, smiles and a certain degree of bewitching. It's the face I see on a kid playing a yo-yo on a dirty street, definitely more than those of kids attempting global annihilation via the latest computer game. Perhaps all this means is that it's time to relish simple pleasures in the coming year.

Or maybe I'm just a little yo-yo myself trying to find meaning in everything. The things I think about when I'm trying to add one more tricky revolution to my cycle!

E-mail the author at: inca_orange@yahoo.com

Lost & found

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

My close friends and I have made it our collective mission to comb the planet's most obscure back streets—physically, telepathically, or through osmosis.

EMOTICONS, smileys, and "The Virgin Suicides" soundtrack marked the first couple days of my New Year. In place of standard fireworks, frostbite and blaring trumpets, 2004 swaggered in for me accompanied by Todd Rundgren and an Instant Messenger extravaganza.

"Greets. Where the [expletive] are you now?" my friend Nick demanded in one of a dozen or so MSN IM windows that spilled open as soon as I signed in.

"Manila. How about you? And everyone else?" There are more than a hundred buddies on my list and, unlike people with extensive but bogus Friendster directories, I have actual friendships with these contacts. So obliquely, Nick broke the news that most of our crew had been swallowed up by the world. Neil was in Ghana, Mike and Pa were in Colombia, Dave was in Brazil, Charlene was in Belgrade (or somewhere in Trinidad), Arif was in Taiwan, and close to 20 others bussed it to Toronto for a university conference, Insane.

In terms of wanderlust, my close friends and I are true kindred spirits. We have made it our collective mission to scour the planet's most obscure back streets—physically, telepathically, or through osmosis. On this level, a quick trip to do something fun—sandskiing in Dubai or spending Spring Break in the Dominican Republic, for example—was something I could easily wrap my brain around. On the other hand, this recent development—the blinding speed with which my amigos left and their game plan to stay away for heaven knows how long—was total Urdu. As I deconstructed the exodus, several dialogue boxes popped up with topics ranging from the supposed Mad Cow outbreak ("The cow was Canadian, the feed was American!") to fickle weather ("-31°C plus windchill today. Nuclear!"). Thankfully, my normally short attention span remained focused on the mystery because the answer wasn't as complicated as I previously imagined.

Unity in diversity

To get my mind off the gray and greasy chunks of processed cow, I turned to the best sleep agent there was outside of Valium: the National Geographic Channel. The choice turned out to be serendipitous, since I stumbled upon "1 Giant Leap." In 2001, visionaries Duncan Bridgeman and Jamie Catto (of Faithless) embarked on a musical safari and crisscrossed the planet to search for like-minded souls in the realms of music, visual and performance arts, and literature. From Ghana to India, New Zealand to England, and more countries in between, the duo chased legendary singers and artists and invited them to take part in their vision of weaving layers of sound and inspiration together into one CD. The result, also called "1 Giant Leap," features a South African choir, syncopated drumbeats by Bangkok university students, and spoken word by a San Francisco DJ. India's spellbinding Asha Bhosle is heard on the same song as REM's Michael Stipe, whose vocals were recorded right in his home in Georgia. In the film, random man-on-the-street testimonials about time, humanity, and hope blend seamlessly with soundbytes from Kurt Vonnegut and a commentary from the oftentimes jet-lagged Catto and Bridgeman.

Witnessing the behind-the-scenes of a dream and the birth of something larger than life, yet simultaneously human, made me lose all notions of borders, even for just an hour. A lot of what went on in the documentary was instinctive and driven by pure inspiration which the producer/artists found in places that most people wouldn't. Mesmerized, I couldn't help but dig up a postcard from the Alberta Human Rights Commission. That card had photos of three babies—African, Asian and Caucasian—and a slogan that read "We are Alberta. Our diversity is our strength." I think "1 Giant Leap" has the same life-affirming message: happiness lies in being one with yourself and with the world around you.

Leaving it all behind

Catching the Pico Iyer buzz of that vicarious experience, I got comfy and read David Elliot Cohen's "One Year Off—Leaving It All Behind for a Round-the-World Journey with Our Children." Cohen and his wife sell everything they had and pull out their three kids from school, and all together they leave cushy Marin County, California and meander around 16 countries in 12 months. Armed with only their passports, several backpacks and their Guatemalan nanny, the Cohens capture the comedy and terror of family tourism, with rousing success.

Gobbling up the 260 plus-page book in a little over three hours, I felt a twinge of spiritual unease that stirred up memories of a similar, though more frenzied, trip I took in 2001. My self-confidence brought me from my home base at the time, South America, to Scandinavia, parts of Africa, the Middle East and Indochina. Like the Cohens, I sometimes wound up in places that were so down on their heels, the word "dicey" didn't even come close.

HAVE A NICE YEAR. Family tourism with comedy and terror

Minor epiphanies

A sabbatical. I think that's the SAT word for the desire to leave, disappear, and recharge when life seems too much to bear. Even mainstream magazines, Vanity Fair among them, underscore the power of a holiday. After all, a brain fried by stress is no good any way you look at it.

Dispatching this epiphany into Manila's papaya-colored sunset, I went back online and caught Dave, who was partying it up in Rio de Janeiro; Ben, a friend from Ottawa who spent some time in Thailand; and Arif, obviously blown away by the skinny girls in Taipei. When I asked them if embracing the unknown in a foreign place was worth it, they all typed answers which, to keep things gangsta, paraphrased to "Damn straight!" Dave added that our buddy Mike couldn't sign in on MSN that often since he was having the time of his life in Cartagena, the first city he's lived in outside North America. Funny, apart from enough frequent flyer miles for two trips on the space shuttle, members of our little posse have also accumulated nuggets of enlightenment and pure bliss.

The short convo I had with those three was just the pep talk I needed to start my year right. Too many people think that travelling is frivolous, that quality journeys are too expensive or farfetched, or that daily responsibilities are way too important to leave behind. That may be true from a superficial perspective. But life is short, and untold stories behind each future encounter should outweigh the fears. I believe we're all born layered like onions and every significant person or experience peels off one layer. Travel fast-forwards this process. Even if it's just a trip around the corner, recontextualizing oneself shows what one is capable of, and brings out hidden aspects of one's character. Sabbaticals may be a luxury for some, but in my opinion, getting temporarily lost really means finding your true self. In truth, it's all that matters.

A Happy New Year prayer

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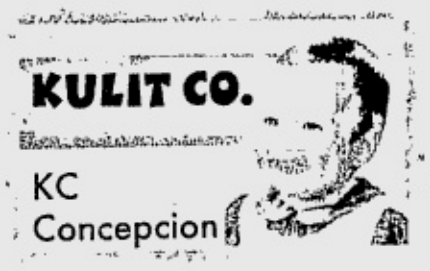

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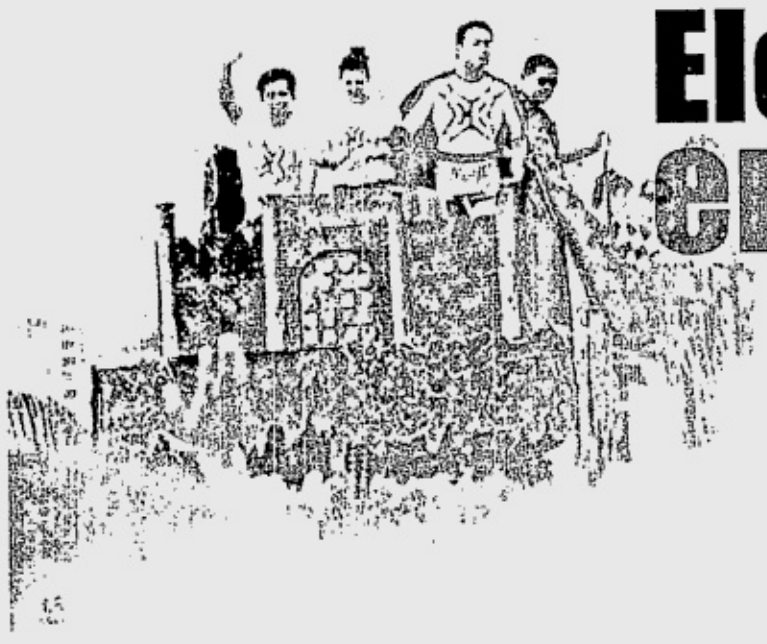

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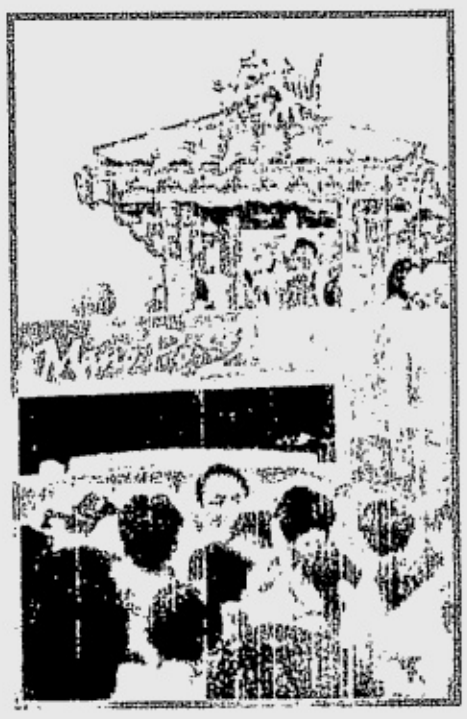

By Lino Cayetano

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In the Philippines, the elections is like a 90-day feast when people are out celebrating and spending money. Whether a celebration is related to religion, politics or entertainment, the fiesta atmosphere is one that is very familiar and appealing to us Filipinos. To open this last film fest, stars paraded in specially-designed, movie-themed floats, waving to huge crowds waiting on either side of main thoroughfares. Not to be outdone, candidates in the forthcoming elections trooped to the Commission on Elections' offices in similar outlandish fashion—with their own hordes chanting slogans and waiving campaign paraphernalia.

Entertainment and politics, in our society, could be mistaken for one another. Jumping political ships is hardly noticed anymore; in fact, it seems to be expected. Hype, publicity and fanfare have become the most important ingredients for both. The idea of success that results in higher box-office receipts, or more votes and higher ratings, has overshadowed the responsibility that comes with the privilege of being popular and admired.

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Through proper handling, the proper image can be created for a great product. An effective pain-relieving drug that is properly marketed can make life easier for millions. An idealistic, competent and honest candidate can share his vision with the people and get elected. An insightful and entertaining film can yield a provocative 30-second trailer that will draw in huge audiences.

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KULIT CO.

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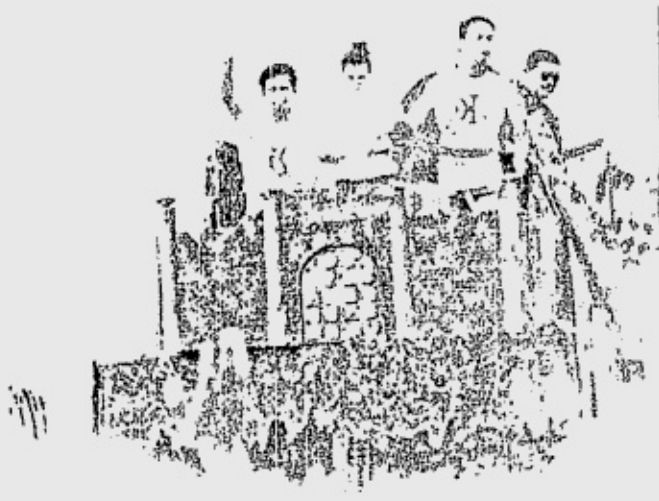

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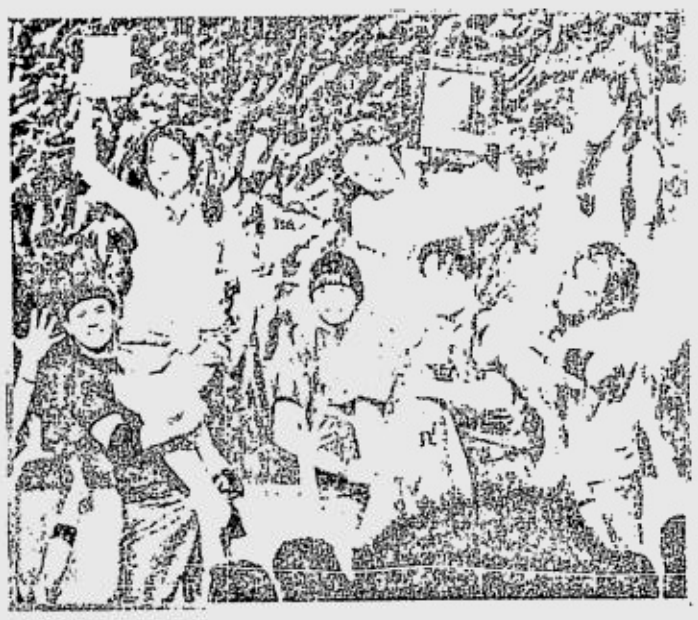

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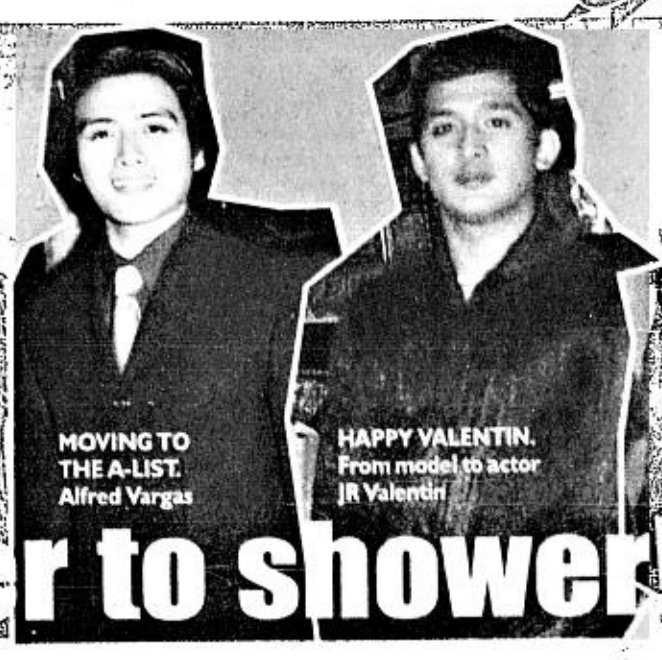
Shower to shower!

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR YOU. Boots Anson-Roa plays mom.


MOVING TO THE A-LIST. Alfred Vargas

HAPPY VALENTIN. From model to actor JR Valentin

HEAVYWEIGHT. Sheryl Cherry Pie Picache

BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN. Christian Vasquez goes pensive

SARAP!

SEIKO, SEIKO'S WALLET. Robbie Tan, bashing in the success of his filmfest hit.

Photos by Rudy Esperas

I AM now a fan of Jeffrey Jeturian's.

After watching "Bridal Shower," I emerged from Greenbelt cinema with newfound faith in the Filipino filmmaker.

"Crying Ladies" may have won the awards, "Captain Barbel" the biggest box office returns, and "Homecoming" the critics' nod, but "Bridal Shower" takes the cake as the most talked-about festival entry.

With crisp and contemporary dialogue, fine portrayals and credible characters that audiences can empathize with, the film tackles issues ordinarily taboo to Pinoy audiences. Sex and sexuality are treated with such great ease, the crowds just lap it up, roaring with every punch!

Dina Bonnevie is effortless in her "Samantha-esque" portrayal, Cherry Pie Picache displays sassy sensitivity, pound per pound (pun intended), and newcomer Francine Prieto essays her role with so much class, she looks fresh all throughout.

Men as the new women

Among the men, newbie Alfred Vargas displays great acting moves (gyrations) as Joebert the macho dancer turned D.I., and the very masculine Rodel Velayo shows great versatility as a gay advertising executive.

The cameos are great, too. Unforgettable is Joy Barrios' bit part as secretary, and Angel Jacob's appearance as Christian Vasquez' first wife. And let's not forget the role of Dina's dog—heaven rest his soul.

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Kudos to Jeffrey Jeturian for coming up with a movie that is unpretentious, simple, humorous, and brilliant

Jeturian uses great visual cues, like animated signboards, to aid his storytelling and help the viewer understand the characters, not to flaunt his prowess for technique. Kudos to this director for coming up with a movie that is unpretentious, simple, humorous, and brilliant.

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FPJ says he's Filipino and there's no stopping him

Story on PAGE A2

'Metrosexual' voted word of year 2003

NEW YORK —"Metrosexual," denoting a fashion conscious heterosexual male, was voted Word of the Year 2003 by the American Dialect Society Friday, beating out some macho Iraq war-linked neologisms in a heated debate.

METROSEXUAL/ A4

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- Trisha Borromeo remembered LIFESTYLE /F1
- 'Otso-otso' not for sale ENTERTAINMENT/A28

Polls can be reset–Drilon

Congress can avert no-election scenario

By Michael Lim Ubac and Martin P. Marfil

AS THE possibility loomed of next May's national elections being suspended over concerns that the Supreme Court would invalidate a contract for automated machines leaving little time to shift to manual counting, Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday said the polls could actually be postponed by an act of Congress.

While he acknowledged some opinions that the Commission on Elections had the power to postpone entire elections, Drilon said that "to avoid confusion and chaos, Congress should pass a law" on the postponement.

But he clarified that any postponement should not go beyond May 30 as the Constitution is explicit in saying that "by June 30, there must be a President and Vice President proclaimed by Congress."

"Congress should not abdicate its role on this matter or else there will be a constitutional crisis," the Senate President said.

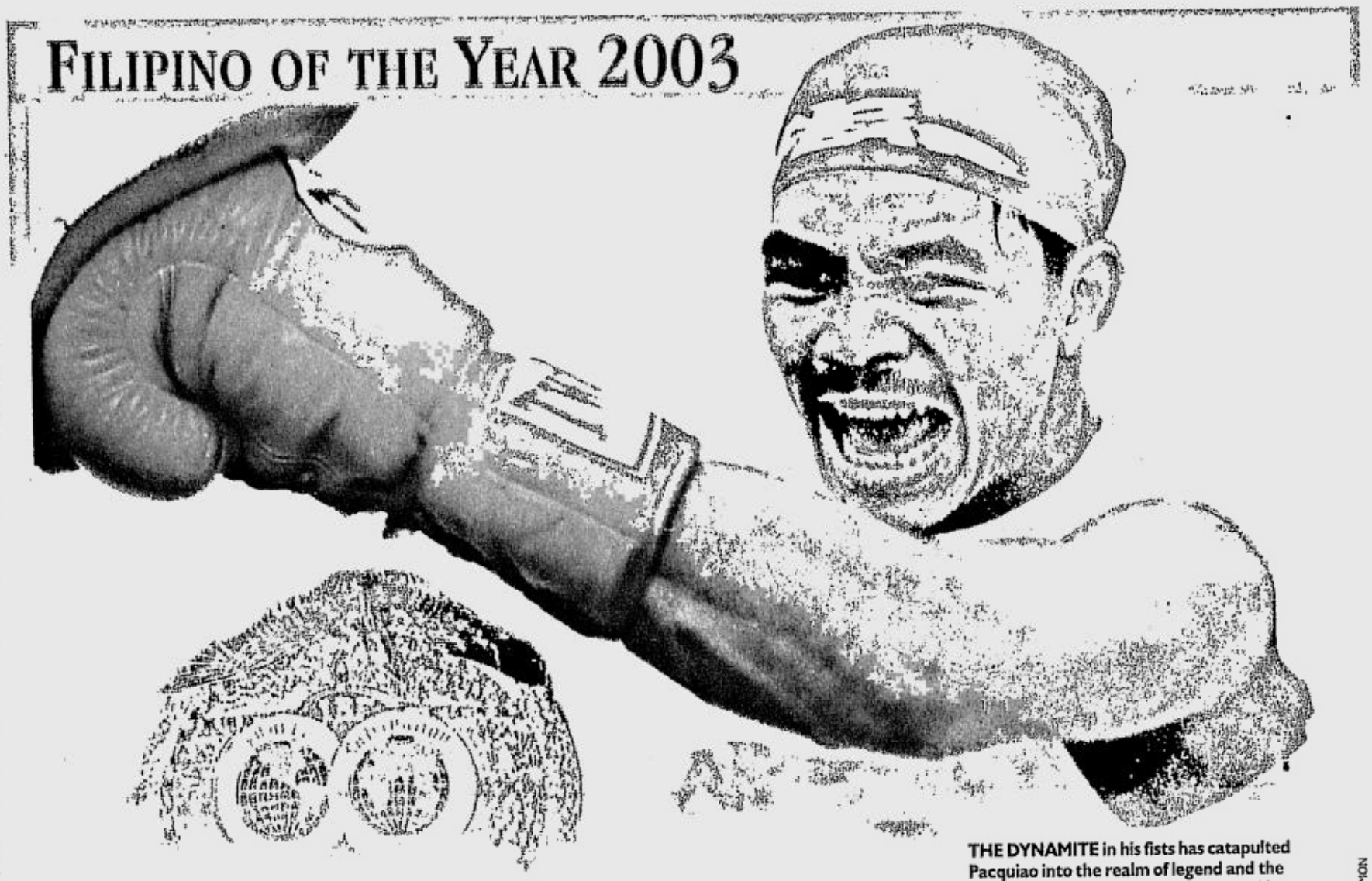
Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos yesterday allayed fears of a "no election" scenario, saying the protagonists from all sides in the May polls should stop making conclusions out of hypothetical situations.

"Definitely, [the elections] will push through. We cannot afford to [postpone] the elections. There's sure to be trouble [if they are postponed]," said Abalos in a phone interview.

Abalos pleaded to the public to wait for the decision of the high court, stressing that whatever the decision, there will be elections.

The "no election" scenario was actually only the last of three scenarios that Drilon outlined yesterday in the event that the

POLLS/ A4



THE DYNAMITE in his fists has catapulted Pacquiao into the realm of legend and the INQUIRER's pantheon of Filipinos of the Year, the first sports figure to make it. He won by a near-unanimous vote by the editors.

VAL HANJUNCHAL

MANNY PACQUIAO

RP sports brat becomes national treasure

THE PHILIPPINE Daily Inquirer annually honors a living Filipino who has made the most positive impact on the life of the nation. It is the first time that the editors have named a sports figure as the Filipino of the Year.

Twenty-five editors nominated the following (in the order of number of votes received): COA's eight-member all-female audit team which uncovered Meralco's overcharges (thanks for the refund, guys), with Cheryll Apalisoc, who single-handedly exposed the irregular PPA computations of four electric coops in the provinces;

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando (also a nominee last year); Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. (who was the Filipino of the Year in 2000); former President Cory Aquino ("for not endorsing any presidential candidate," said one editor); Speaker Jose de Venecia (for adhering to the high court ruling on the Davide impeachment despite the high risk of losing his post); Juan de la Cruz, the Filipino Everyman as the usual long-suffering victim of the usual suspects; Josette Biyo (science teacher who won the Intel Excellence Teaching Award, and carries the distinction of being the only Filipino with an asteroid named after her); CJ Suarez, the World Cup bowling champ, and Ltsg. Antonio Trillanes, one of the outspoken and charismatic leaders of the Oakwood mutiny.

FOR PROVIDING a stream of light, hope and pride in a year darkened by the war in Iraq, the SARS outbreak, the Oakwood mutiny, corruption scandals and the sleazy political wheeling and dealing in the runup to this year's election, boxing champion Manny Pacquiao has been chosen by the INQUIRER as the Filipino of the Year 2003.

He was the hero the Philippine Sportswriters Association branded a heel for snubbing the Philippine Sports Association (PSA) Awards Night early in 2003 where he was a Co-Athlete of the Year honoree with Asian Games champion Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski.

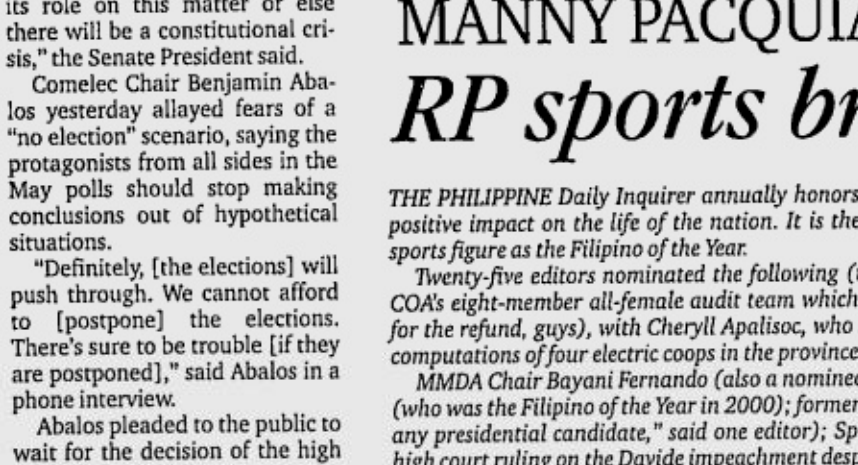
And it didn't help his reputation any when he went into a drunken rampage after being snubbed by a singer at a bar in General Santos City during a nightout with the boys last June.

But five months later, Paquiao turned all this around.

First, the former bakery worker from General Santos City reminded everybody that he still packed dynamite in both fists, defending his International Boxing Federation (IBF) super bantamweight title for the fourth time with a third-round technical knockout of the erstwhile unbeaten Emmanuel Lucero

RP SPORTS/A8

After a loss, an empty nest expects new arrival



THE 'EXPECTANT' mother, Miriam Defensor-Santiago is all prepared for the little boy that's soon going to fill her home with the longed-for "joyful noise." JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

By Jerry Esplanada

IF MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago is thrilled these days, it's not so much because of her reentry into politics as the impending arrival of the "newest member" of her family.

"We're about to get our new baby boy from the Cribs orphanage," the ex-senator told the INQUIRER, waxing enthusiastic about the child born in August and who, she said, "looks just like" her elder son Narciso III (or Archie) when he was a baby.

Everything is ready at the family's two-story villa in the posh La Vista subdivision in Quezon City, the expectant mother having done with shopping for the "entire complete equipment and facility for the baby."

Santiago said she bought the stuff herself at various shops before she left for a vacation in the United States on Dec. 23. That includes two cribs, she said, "one for upstairs and one for downstairs, so he always has a place."

No, the baby is not a replacement for her younger son Alexander Robert (AR), who died at 23 in November by his own hand.

The decision that "we would adopt a total of four kids" was made by "my husband [Narciso Jr., a former interior undersecretary], my two birth children and [me]," said Santiago, author of the Philippine law on domestic adoption.

The family had earlier adopted two

AFTER/ A8

Six solons running unopposed

By Carlito Pablo

EITHER THEY are so loved, or feared, or both, but these six members of the House of Representatives are certain to be the envy of their colleagues.

They are running unopposed in their districts while their colleagues have to contend with challengers on top of taking care of local bets and campaigning for national candidates.

They are Representatives Edmundo Reyes Jr. (Marinduque) and Augusto Bacullo (Misamis Oriental), both of the ruling Lakas-CMD; Jesli Lapus (Tarlac), Gilberto Teodoro Jr. (Tarlac) and Mark Cojuangco (Pangasinan), all of the Nationalist People's Coalition, and Eric Singson (Ilocos Sur) of the Liberal Party.

According to Reyes, who chairs the House committee on education, it is "every public servant's dream to run unopposed."

But it is also a burden because "this gift comes with an obligation to improve one's service to the community," he noted.

SIX SOLONS/ A4

With no US visa, Erap seeks another country

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada is looking for another country to go to for medical treatment after reportedly encountering problems securing a visa to the United States where he originally wanted to have his knee replacement operation done.

"It could be Japan or any third country with the same medical facilities [as the US]," said a source privy to Estrada's plans.

Another source said Estrada may choose to go to a European country.

The source said that once his alternative plans are firmed up, Estrada will ask for the Sandiganbayan's approval to travel to that country instead of the US.

The source said that Estrada, who is said to be suffering from arthritic knees and multiple slipped disc problems, decided to look for an alternative after he learned that he might run into problems securing a US visa.

"The US apparently has guidelines that heads of state with pending cases cannot be issued a visa," the source said.

In a dzRH interview last week, the jailed leader's wife, Sen. Loi Ejercito, said she had been told by a US Embassy officer that Estrada would be refused if he applied for a visa as "they don't want a domestic problem to be brought there."

The source said that even if it was ar-

WITH/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern section of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/01/11/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

FPJ: I'm a Filipino

By Michael Ubac and Armand N. Nocum

UNFAZED BY the latest attempt to derail his presidential bid, actor Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday declared unequivocally that he was a Filipino citizen.

"Yes, I am a Filipino," said the standard-bearer of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP), when asked by reporters during a break in the meeting of the KNP ticket Friday night in Makati City.

"No criticisms or attacks can hurt me because I have a goal and I will focus on that goal to restore the confidence of the people in the government," reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. quoted Poe as saying in a separate interview.

Poe and his running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, would campaign on the platform of regaining the trust and confidence of the public in the government, Pimentel said.

He said that Poe, who is leading in all poll surveys, dismissed the renewed bid to disqualify him based on his citizenship as part of an elaborate plan by Malacañang to stop his impending victory in the May polls.

The senator, who is running under the FPJ-Legarda ticket, insisted that Poe was a natural-born Filipino citizen.

"How can he be not a Pinoy when his (late) father was always a Filipino?" said Pimentel, a constitutional lawyer.

Pimentel branded the petition of lawyer Victorino Fornier, who asked the Commission on Elections on Friday to disqualify Poe, as a mere scrap of paper.

And the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) yesterday warned the Comelec against allowing itself to be used by political forces out to derail Poe's presidential bid.

Lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, spokesperson of the PMP—the political party of ousted President Joseph Estrada—said how the Comelec handles the issue of Poe's citizenship would tell whether the 2004 elections would be fair.

POE

"As it is, the Comelec is already saddled with doubts as a result of its half-baked decision to uphold the candidacies of both Poe and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a move seen as the poll body's way of giving the administration candidate the upper hand," Rodriguez said in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

"Capitulating to underhanded moves to disqualify Mr. Poe would only fuel more serious doubts about the Comelec's credibility. This would in turn put the results of the May 2004 elections into question," he said, adding that the voting public was closely watching developments in the case.

In his petition, Fornier claimed that Poe was not a natural-born Filipino citizen since his father, Allan F. Poe, had Spanish parents while his mother, Bessie Kelley, was an American.

To prove that the movie king was a natural-born Filipino, Pimentel cited the Jones Law enacted during the American occupation and even the Treaty of Paris which ceded the Philippines to the US.

"Under the Jones Law and the Treaty of Paris, Spanish citizens who were living in the country at the time of the ceding of the Philippines to America were automatically considered citizens of the Philippines," said Pimentel.

"Therefore, it does not matter whether his mother was an American because the citizenship of his father was Filipino," said Pimentel, who stressed that the country follows the fraternal lineage in determining the citizenship of a new-born child.

In a statement, KNP spokesperson Rod Reyes and senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda said the latest attack on Poe was an "act of panic and desperation" on the part of his detractors.

"They (Poe's political foes) know it's a lose-lose situation for them. They're trying to invent all kinds of issues because they know that whatever they do, our ratings will continue to go higher and higher," said Maceda.

Reyes reiterated that Poe's citizenship was a long-resolved legal issue as proven by the issuance of a Philippine passport to Poe by the foreign affairs department.

Rodriguez, immigration commissioner in the Estrada administration, said the case against Poe had no leg to stand on.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs issued (Poe) a Philippine passport. The Bureau of Immigration has certified that he is a Filipino," he said.

NPA attacks solon who didn't pay 'tax'

LEGAZPI CITY—Rep. Jose Solis Jr., of the second district of Sorsogon, narrowly escaped death while his two drivers were seriously wounded, after they were attacked by 10 unidentified men dressed in fatigue uniforms on Friday in Barangay Union, Gubat, Sorsogon.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Solis said the suspects, whom he believed to be members of the New People's Army (NPA), accused him of not paying permit to campaign (PTC) fees.

Solis identified his drivers as Gary Guyala, his cousin, and Raul Solis, his nephew. Guyala almost lost his left leg, while a bullet is still embedded in Solis' right arm.

The congressman was about to speak at the turnover ceremony for a road project when the suspects arrived and told everyone to drop to the ground. The crowd scampered away, leaving Reyes and his drivers, who were shot and relieved of their service pistols.

"The commander then approached me ... poked his gun at my stomach and accused me of violating their revolutionary law by not paying the PTC fee," Solis said.

Army Col. Ramon Santos, 202nd Brigade commander, said the military was conducting pursuit operations and had placed check points in strategic areas. He told the INQUIRER, however, he doubted the suspects were NPA members. "They didn't know what to do during the incident, and they looked like goons based on our interview with Representative Solis' drivers," Santos said.

Comelec Bicol director Zacarias Zaragosa refused to classify the incident as election-related. He said the incident had to be investigated to see if it was initiated by the Congressman's political opponents.

Also on Friday, a town mayor in Davao del Sur cheated death when a landmine exploded in the path of his service vehicle. Magsaysay Mayor Arthur Davin's police escort, SP02 Eduardo Adlawan, was wounded in the blast. Davin's party was on its way to the municipal hall after attending a fiesta in Barangay Malawanit. P02 Henry Ruiz, public information officer of the Southern Mindanao police, said investigators are still trying to find out if the incident was election-related. *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Dennis Jay C. Santos and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mainstream Left invites everybody but Gloria, Noli, Ping

By Carlito Pablo

THE MAINSTREAM Left, claiming it could mobilize at least two million votes for their favored candidates, has decided not to invite the administration's bets to its convention.

Bayan Muna president Rep. Satur Ocampo said his party-list group had invited only movie star Fernando Poe Jr., former Education Secretary Raul Roco and evangelist and former activist Eddie Villanueva to its third national convention on Jan. 13 at the Bahay ng Alumni at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

The Left-leaning party-list group excluded President Macapagal-Arroyo and Sen. Panfilo Lacson for its guest list.

Among the vice-presidential candidates, only Sen. Loren Legarda and former Tarlac Rep. Herminie Aquino, the running mates of Poe and Roco, respectively, were invited to the Bayan Muna convention.

Ocampo explained that Sen. Noli de Castro, who is leading the surveys among vice presidential aspirants, was not invited because he is the running mate of Ms Macapagal.

"The convention will be our venue to listen to the platforms of governance that will be presented by our invited presidentiables," Ocampo said. "What the presidential candidates will say will form our initial basis to evaluate the possibility of endorsement by Bayan Muna," he added.

Ocampo said that "up for grabs could be at least two million organized votes" commanded by Bayan Muna.

In the 2001 elections, Bayan Muna garnered the highest number of votes at 1.7 million among party-list groups, the highest since party-list elections were held.

Commenting on this development, former Ifugao Rep. Gualberto Lumauig, who heads the political group of Roco's campaign staff, said this indicates the worsening political isolation of Ms Macapagal.

"Concerned national and church leaders should now help convince President Macapagal to quit her presidential bid in favor of Roco," Lumauig said.

Lumauig said that for the President to quit now before the start of the campaign season would be a "wise and pragmatic decision."

"The struggling economy, the climate of extreme political division, the record in level budgetary deficit and the mass disenchantment at ground level have all but drowned her claim that she has competence and experience," Lumauig said.

Ocampo, however, stressed that Bayan Muna "may not endorse any presidential candidate at all, if the program of action that the candidates will present to the group would be found wanting, or insincere."

President Macapagal has been severely criticized by the Left for her solid support for the US-led global war on terrorism and for her economic programs anchored on trade liberalization.

Lacson, a former Constabulary and police officer, is frowned upon by the militant sector for his supposedly spotty human rights record.

At its Tuesday convention, Bayan Muna will select by secret ballot its nominees for party-list representatives to Congress.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Republika ng Pilipinas
Lungsod Quezon

TANGGAPAN NG PUNONG LUNGSOD
(OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR)

The Public is notified that **Executive Order Number 30-A** issues on **December 22, 2003** by the Honorable City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Jr. **reduced** the list of Strictly Regulated (High Risk) businesses to the following:

1. Hotel, Motel, Apartelle, Inn, Dormitory
2. Theater, Auditorium, Convention Hall, Concert Hall
3. Cockpit
4. Laboratory
5. Junk Shop
6. Cooking Gas Outlet and Gas Refilling Station
7. School
8. Manufacturing Plant and Assembly Plant
9. Distillery and Brewery
10. Compound Mixing Plant and Chemical Warehouse
11. Sauna Bath House (Massage Clinic), Health Club, Therapeutic Service
12. Funeral Parlor
13. Warehouse and Terminal Garage

All other businesses not included in the above list may renew their permit upon submission to the BPLO of the following:

1. Original copy of Business Permit for year 2003
2. Receipt of Payment of fees and taxes
3. Barangay Clearance
4. Locational Clearance

However, under Section 69 of the Quezon City Revenue Code of 1993, Ordinance Sp-91, s-93, issuance of Permit does not relieve the business owner from fulfilling the requirements of the other Departments in connection with the operation of their businesses.

They must therefore comply, in so far as it applies to the nature of their business, with the requirements of obtaining the following:

1. Fire Safety Inspection Certificate (FSIC);
2. Sanitary permit (SP);
3. Certificate of Electrical Inspection (CEI);
4. Mechanical Permit/Certificate of Inspection;
5. CTAO Clearance/Certificate; and
6. Other requirements specially required by the nature of their businesses.

Renewal of Business Permit as well as compliance with, and submission of all the requirements is the responsibility of business establishment owners, and not of national or local offices concerned.

PACIFICO F. MAGHACOT, JR.
Assistant City Administrator for General Affairs
and
OIC-BPLO

NPA purge was wrong, Ka Roger now admits

By Norman Bordadora

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE—"It was the height of madness."

Thus did Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal describe "the purge" in the late 1980s that resulted in the torture, and death, of many New People's Army cadres suspected of being deep-penetration agents.

"I was prepared to receive the maximum penalty from the party," Rosal said, recalling that period in 1987 when the regional committee in southern Tagalog decided to investigate alleged infiltrators.

Admission

By his own remorseful admission, Rosal was part of the committee that granted the Melito Glor Command a free hand in the probe, allowing it to conduct physical and mental torture "if need be."

"It was wrong," Rosal said during an interview with a handful of journalists in an NPA camp somewhere in the Cordilleras. Present were young rebels, who must have been no more than children when the CPP conducted Operation Missing Link against some of its brightest cadres.

Rosal eluded government checkpoints to meet with the invited newsmen.

ROSAL

Crime

"The INQUIRER called it a purge," he noted. "But the party, in its apology, called it even worse. It was a crime. There was no respect for human rights."

Rosal said the tales of torment, humiliation and brutal deaths were accurate. "The details are unnerving. The term 'madness' best describes the paranoia. Coming back to the camp in southern Tagalog from my posting in south Quezon, I was surprised by the number of those being held as (suspected) infiltrators."

He said the CPP had apologized to the victims, some of whom have rejoined the party, and to the families of those who died. "We told them that if they lost a child, we lost some of our brightest comrades in the revolution because of the madness and wrong policies implemented at the time."

Not all apologies have been accepted, Rosal admitted, saying, "We have to live with this dire consequence."

Heroes

The party was offering "humble compensation" for the victims or their families, Rosal said, as well as counseling for those severely traumatized. "It has also declared those who died as heroes of the revolution. From convicted spies, they've been hailed as martyrs."

But there has been some difficulty in locating the bodies. Rosal explained: "Even the perpetrators were traumatized, and could not pinpoint the burial grounds. They'd rather not go back to the places where the killings happened."

Never again

Not one of those who conducted Operation Missing Link and the earlier Kampanyang Ahos in Mindanao was sentenced to death as punishment. Rosal said the highest penalty within the CPP was expulsion from the ranks.

He said a rectification campaign in 1992 had addressed the policy flaws that led to the purge and that this meant one thing for sure: "It will never happen again."

SHE WOULD HAVE NAMED 8 OF 15 JUSTICES

'Appointment to give GMA control of SC'

By Armand N. Nocum

A PRIVATE prosecutor yesterday strongly opposed the planned appointment of Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita Chico-Nazario to the 15-man Supreme Court, warning that this would give "unlimited and unbound" power to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Marichu Lambino, private prosecutor in the plunder and graft cases filed against deposed President Joseph Estrada before the Sandiganbayan, noted that Nazario was "friendly" with Ms Macapagal.

The Palace is currently looking for a replacement for Supreme Court Justice Josue Bellosillo who retired last year.

According to Lambino, Ms Macapagal stands to exercise "unlimited and unbound" power should she appoint a "friendly" judicial person to the high tribunal.

Historic first

"This last major appointment of (President) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, of a Supreme Court justice who had been friendly to her, will result in a court where eight out of 15 justices will be Macapagal appointees, a first in the history of the Philippines," said Lambino.

The Judicial and Bar Council headed by SC Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is set to interview Nazario on Jan. 17.

"Should (Ms Macapagal) become President this year, she holds a monopoly of power unlimited and unbound," she said."There is no honor among those blinded by ambition—give them a little or temporary power and they want infinite and unlimited power."

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, Lambino said she saw the hand of the Palace in the crafting of the controversial resolution which allowed Estrada to travel abroad to undergo knee replacement surgery.

Nazario, chair of the Sandiganbayan's special division, penned the resolution that Lambino claimed appeared to be part of Malacañang's effort to "get rid" of Estrada during the campaign and the election period. Estrada supports the presidential bid of his close friend, Fernando Poe Jr., who is leading all surveys.

Nothing stopping Erap

In its resolution, the Sandiganbayan cited Estrada's deteriorating health and the fact that there was no "express provision of law" stopping him from traveling as among the chief considerations for the court's reversal of its earlier ruling.

"The turn of events between Gloria and Justice Nazario will give the appearance of a quid pro quo–something for something–favor for favor–injustice for ambition," Lambino said.

According to her, the President "can get what she wants" because she has "unofficial representatives in the JBC through the DOJ and the Lakas legislators or allies who sit in the JBC."

Nazario was not available for comment.

No deal

But Renato Bocar, spokesperson of the Sandiganbayan's first division, downplayed the possibility of a quid pro quo between Malacañang and Nazario, noting that Nazario's application was still with of the JBC.

"JBC is an independent body. It has many members. It cannot be manipulated," he said.

Bocar also said that Nazario, who is taking a crack at the high tribunal for the third time, was "not interested in the position because she has a more high-profile post" at the Sandiganbayan. Nazario's present post is equivalent to that of an associate SC justice. "It's not that attractive a post for the presiding justice. There's no desire on her part to take the job," he said.

PRESSING the flesh as she expresses her solidarity and concern for the poor in Barangay 211, New Antipolo, Tondo, Manila, where President Macapagal inspects her "Patubig" (water) program. VAL HANDUMON

Metro voters list alarms Comelec

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday expressed alarm over the surge in new voters and transferees in Metro Manila, saying that the number had risen by 25 percent.

According to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, the number of voters in Metro Manila rose from 5,263,780 in 2002 to about 6,674,520, or an increase of about 25 percent.

Of the new figures, 1,251,554 were new registrants while 159,186 were transferees.

"There is an alarming increase in registration, very alarming," he said during a meeting yesterday with candidates, their representatives and some Metro Manila officials.

Abalos appealed to representatives of the contending parties to help ensure clean elections by helping weed out double or triple registrants.

.He said this could be done by checking the addresses of the registrants and verifying if they were indeed residents of the places claimed.

Once they have identified the bogus voters, Abalos said that all they need to do is file a sworn affidavit by next week with the Comelec which would then file exclusion proceedings and criminal charges.

"Let us join hands and file exclusion proceedings against them. Give us the evidence, let us help each other," he said.

The candidates themselves brought stories to the Comelec of how they discovered scores of registered people living at one address, others who were brought to the metropolis for registration, and some who gave their address as Villamor Air Base.

In the same forum, Abalos also showed off the poll body's controversial counting machines to be used in the elections and fed some sample ballots into it.

Candidates had many questions to ask about the machines. *Martin P. Marfil*

Polls can be reset–Drilon

From page A1

Supreme Court would rule to either uphold or invalidate the legality of a contract awarded to a Korean company to supply automated counting machines.

Should the high court uphold the contract, the Comelec would push through with selective automated elections, provided President Macapagal-Arroyo allows a joint congressional resolution providing for selective automation to lapse into law, according to Drilon.

To veto or approve

Ms Macapagal has until Jan. 15 to act on the resolution; whether to veto or approve it. If the President fails to act on it, the bill will automatically become law within 30 days from transmittal.

And if the President were to veto the resolution, then the May 10 elections will be fully automated.

Should the SC strike down the bidding for the automated contract as illegal, however, the poll body would be forced to shift back to manual counting of votes, said Drilon.

120 days lead time

He said that if the high court rules on the issue by next week, "we can still meet the 120 days lead time in order to conduct manual elections."

If the decision does not come out next week and Comelec officials were to claim that there was no more time to prepare for a shift to a manual vote count, Drilon said that elections could be postponed because of time constraints.

"There is a provision under the Constitution that elections should be held on the second Monday of May, unless otherwise provided by law," so Congress, not Comelec, can postpone elections, he said.

Asked whether Congress could push through with the presidential elections but postpone the local elections, Drilon said such a scenario was "not possible."

Although Congress could justify a holdover term for local officials, from governors down to city councilors, separating the national and local elections would have legal and political repercussions, he said.

Playing safe

Playing safe, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday refused to step into the controversy, saying she would rather wait for the Supreme Court to rule on the validity of the contract for the automated machines.

"The President shall wait for the decision of the court," her spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said in a statement.

"While the President has stated her personal position on this matter, she does not want to comment further nor act in any manner that could be interpreted as interfering with deliberations of the Supreme Court," Bunye said.

Bunye said the President has stated her preference for full automation of the May elections and has provided P3 billion for the Comelec's computerization program.

The President also did not veto, as of yesterday, the joint congressional resolution calling for selective automation.

"The President has not acted on the joint resolution. The President simply says she does not want to act in any manner that could be interpreted as interference," Bunye said in a phone interview.

Amendment to law

The measure, which was approved by both houses of Congress, would amend the law providing for full computerization of elections.

Drilon said he was told that the joint congressional resolution was received in Malacañang on Dec. 15, giving the President up to Jan. 15 to act on it.

As speculation mounted that the high court would nullify the contract for the automated machines, the high tribunal's spokesperson yesterday said the public can expect the SC's decision by next week.

En banc session Tuesday

Ismael Khan Jr., the head of the SC Public Information Office, said the ruling could come out after the SC's en banc session on Tuesday.

Khan made the statement as senators crossed party lines on Friday to call on the high court to immediately release its decision on the case.

"As far as I know, the court is still deliberating on it. There is no indication on how the voting will go," Khan said.

A ranking government official told the INQUIRER on Monday that the SC was going to void the contract. He even said that the Court was supposed to come out with its ruling last Wednesday.

An SC official, who requested anonymity, later said the decision's release was delayed because some issues "had to be sorted out." The official did not elaborate.

Not pressured

Khan said the high tribunal would not be pressured on how it would rule on the issue.

"You know the Supreme Court has learned to live with pressure. But it will not be influenced," he said.

As the Comelec yesterday contended that the poll body has no more time to shift to manual elections, its citizen's arm insisted that it can still be done.

Bill Luz, secretary general of the Namfrel, said the Comelec would need only 120 days to make the shift from computerized to manual but warned that the count has started.

He said if the decision to nullify is handed down, the Comelec should not waste any more time in motions for reconsideration but should get to work right away shifting to manual elections.

Luz said there are now only 121 days for the Comelec to make the needed preparations, plus or minus 15 days for planning.

Worst case

In a worst case scenario, he said that there would be only 105 days left to prepare for manual elections.

But Abalos claimed the task simply cannot be done. He said it would be like asking a pregnant woman to wait for more than 10 months to give birth.

"I don't think we could," Abalos said when asked if there was still time to shift to manual elections.

Luz said the Namfrel was for now preparing for fully automated elections but its preparations would not be greatly affected by an adverse SC decision as it can still conduct a quick count if the voting goes manual.

This was the same view advanced by former Namfrel executive director Telibert Laoc who said that he believes in the capability of the Comelec personnel though the time allotted for preparations would be "tight".

"Those people in the Comelec know what to do, especially the senior staff, they can pull it off," he said.

There will also be much tension and pressure but Comelec officials will be able to cope, Laoc said.

No to selective automation

Although their opinions differed on the shift to manual elections, both Comelec and Namfrel officials expressed opposition to the plan for selective automation approved by the joint Congress resolution.

Luz said this was "worse" than the return to full manual elections.

"This would be much more chaotic. They want to implement automation for only 20 percent while 80 percent would be manual. That would be more confusing to the public, messier for both the Comelec and the public," Luz told reporters.

Luz said if the joint resolution was an enrolled bill—meaning it can can lapse into law after 30 days if not vetoed—the President should veto it.

If it lapses into law, "Congress should not interfere and Comelec should have a free hand in what areas to operate," he said.

Abalos said he did not believe the Comelec can implement the hybrid proposal, as it would mean the poll body has again to acquire paper for the manual ballots.

"We are not prepared for something that is still to come... the law provides for nationwide implementation [of computerized elections], so we prepared for that," he said.

Technical problems

The principal author of the resolution on selective automation yesterday claimed that the Comelec was encountering considerable technical problems on the automation of the 2004 national and local polls.

Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, co-chair of the joint congressional oversight committee on electoral modernization, said these include delays in the setting up of terminals that will transmit the count of votes to be made by counting machines.

Lapus noted that the so-called VSATs (very small aperture terminals) to be used for satellite transmission of data from the counting centers to the national level for canvassing purposes have yet to be put up.

Lapus also said that while Abalos has announced that a mock elections were scheduled for Jan. 20 to test the readiness of the system, various tests on the counting and canvassing software would not be completed earlier than Feb. 2. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Carlito Pablo and Philip C. Tubeza*

'Metrosexual' voted word of year 2003

From page A1

The winning noun, chosen as the word that most colored the nation's discourse last year, defeated "pre-emptive self-defense," or an attack before a possible attack, and the verb "embed"—to place a journalist with troops.

WMD, SARS

Among the other nominated words and phrases that failed to make the cut were "weapons of mass deception," "SARS," and a trio of terms used to describe the current governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger—"governator," "gropenator" and "gropenfuhrer."

Voting was held at the society's annual conference in Boston, with 70 participants casting their ballots.

Trivial

The president of the society's new word committee, Wayne Glowka, admitted that "metrosexual" had been a contentious choice, with some members "grumbling" that it was somewhat derogatory and trivial.

"The word of the year is supposed, in some way, to define who or what we are, so it was quite a strange in that sense," Glowka told AFP.

"On the one hand you had words associated with people toughing it out in the deserts of Iraq, and then the winner was guys who hang around the cosmetics counter," he added.

In fact "metrosexual" has been around for a number of years, but rose to prominence in 2003, partly due to the hit television show "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," in which five gay men give a weekly makeover to a grungy-looking heterosexual.

"There was a feeling that Iraq-linked words were in danger of dominating everything and, while the war was obviously important, some voters felt it was necessary to acknowledge there were other things going on," Glowka explained.

Obsession

The American obsession with diet was loosely reflected in two other categories, with "flexitarian" (a vegetarian who occasionally eats meat) winning the Most Useful Word title, while "freegan" (a person who eats only what they can get for free) was voted Most Creative Word.

Freedom fries

In the Most Unnecessary Word category—denoting a term for which an already perfectly good word exists—the surprise winner was "freedom" in the sense of replacing "French" in phrases or compound nouns such as "French fries." The term gained currency in the United States as a form of protest against France's opposition to the war in Iraq. *AFP*

Six solons running unopposed

From page A1

Reyes, who represents the lone district of Marinduque, said the pressure to deliver was greater for him and his fellow unopposed candidates because of the "increasing expectations of our constituents."

Good looks

Lapus said in a separate interview that the absence of a challenger was "a first" in the history of the third district of Tarlac.

Asked why no one was running against him, Lapus could afford to joke: "It's the fruit of our intimidating good looks."

Teodoro, the representative of Tarlac's first district who will be serving his third and last term in 2004-2007, thinks his lack of challengers is "not really" a matter of a candidate being so loved or feared.

He said potential aspirants for his seat were just being "practical."

"Why challenge the incumbent when they can simply wait for another three years?" he added.

Tarlac has three legislative districts. Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III of the second district faces three challengers.

Mark Cojuangco, one of two sons of business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco in the House, earlier declared that the local alliance between Lakas and the NPC in his fifth district of Pangasinan would carry the election bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

It was not immediately known if Rep. Carlos "Charlie" Cojuangco (NPC, Negros Occidental) is running unopposed like his brother Mark.

BACULLO: The gift comes with a responsibility.

TEODORO: Challengers can wait.

LAPUS: Intimidating good looks

Waiter, seaman

Other prominent lawmakers are unfazed by their challengers.

In the estimation of Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City), he is running "virtually unopposed" because his challengers are a restaurant waiter and a seaman.

It was earlier thought that Jesus Dureza, an adviser of Ms Macapagal's and a former Davao City councilor, would challenge Nograles' reelection bid. But this did not materialize, purportedly because of Nograles' strong performance as the incumbent.

"This is an affirmation of my belief that the electorate of Davao City's first district has politically matured," Nograles said.

Not serious

Lakas Representatives Juan Miguel Zubiri (Bukidnon) and Robert Ace Barbers (Surigao del Norte) are facing challengers but are confident of winning another term.

"Our main focus is to campaign for the reelection of the President," said Zubiri who, along with Barbers, is a member of the speakers' bureau of Ms Macapagal's campaign team.

Barbers said that while he and Zubiri did not want to make light of their challengers, "we don't consider them serious threats."

Even Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. is facing a challenger—reportedly a former councilor of Dagupan City—but he is expected to be reelected.

Cops kill jealous husband who took priest hostage

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A jealous husband was killed after he took a Catholic priest hostage for more than eight hours yesterday.

Police said Antonio Lerios had suspected that Fr. Raymar Dagoc of the Holy Cross Parish in Barangay Balulang here was having an affair with his wife Arlyn.

Police said that based on their investigation, an enraged Lerios went to the Holy Cross Parish convent at around 9 a.m. purposely to confront Dagoc, the parish priest.

Supt. Antonio Montalba, city police chief, said Dagoc had no inkling of the suspect's intention and had readily welcomed him to the convent. Lerios was a guitarist for the bparish choir.

Secretary

Sources said Lerios was a jealous husband who would hurt his wife, who used to work as the parish secretary, when he would see her talking to other men.

After Dagoc moved to the parish about three years ago, the same sources said, Lerios began to suspect that the priest liked his wife.

Montalba said that as soon as Lerios got inside the convent, he confronted the priest but Dagoc did not take him seriously.

At this point, Lerios pulled out a .38-cal. revolver and fired a single shot. He then seized the priest and threatened him.

The shot alarmed church workers who summoned police.

Agitated

An uncle of Lerios' arrived and talked to the suspect but the latter refused to release the priest.

Montalba said that as they talked to the suspect, he appeared to become increasingly agitated.

Lerios told negotiators that he wanted his wife to talk to him but the woman had left him and was in Cebu.

As the negotiations dragged on, Montalba said they became worried about Lerios' psychological state so the police devised a rescue plan.

He said that at around 5 p.m., the police decided to execute the plan.

Montalba said police stormed the convent after Lerios refused to release Dagoc and surrender.

"We had exhausted all peaceful means and we had to send in our assault team," he said.

But the two shots fired by a policeman identified only as SP02 Justiniani proved to be fatal as they hit Lerios in the chest.

Monsignor Reynaldo Monsanto, vicar general of the Cagayan Diocese, said they were saddened by the incident and would investigate Lerios' allegations.

Monsanto said, however, that they would give Dagoc a chance to recover from his ordeal before starting the investigation. *Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AFP*

Maguindanao blast suspect nabbed

By Rosa-May V. De Guzman
and Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

PARANG, Maguindanao – Soldiers on Friday arrested a former leader of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in connection with the Jan. 4 bomb attack at a gymnasium here that killed at least 22 people and wounded 81 others, including Mayor Vivencio Bataga.

Senior Supt. Isnaji Bantala, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police director, said Omar Ramalan, alias Commander Bagibagi, was arrested at a checkpoint set up by the Army's 64th Infantry Battalion in nearby Matanog town.

Bantala said Ramalan and his wife were heading toward this town on a motorcycle when they were stopped by the soldiers on the Narciso Ramos Highway.

A witness had pointed to Ramalan as being involved in the bombing.

"A civilian helped us in our investigation. The witness positively identified him (Ramalan) as among the culprits," Bantala said.

He said witnesses also identified a reelectionist Parang councilor as a suspect, while the motorcycle on which the homemade bomb had been placed reportedly belonged to court employee Hadji Suharto Amad.

Amad, a resident of Bongo Island off Parang, however, denied the motorcycle was his. He said it appeared that somebody had copied his motorcycle's plate number and used it to implicate him in the incident.

Government employee

"In fact, I am a government employee. I work in a local court as a stenographer. Never in my life have I encountered a problem like this," Amad said over Radio Mindanao Network in Cotabato City.

But Bataga, who had just finished giving a speech at the packed gym when the homemade bomb exploded, said Amad played a role in the bombing.

He said the councilor and Amad were also behind previous attempts to assassinate him.

"They were the suspects in [a previous] April 5 bombing but there were no witnesses against them. Now that their names were published and aired through radio stations nationwide, definitely they will not allow authorities to arrest them... they will hide," said Bataga.

Bantala urged the suspects in the bombing to come forward in order to clear their names.

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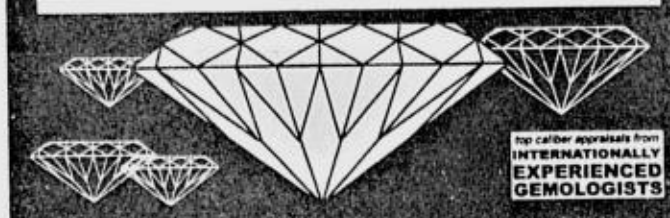

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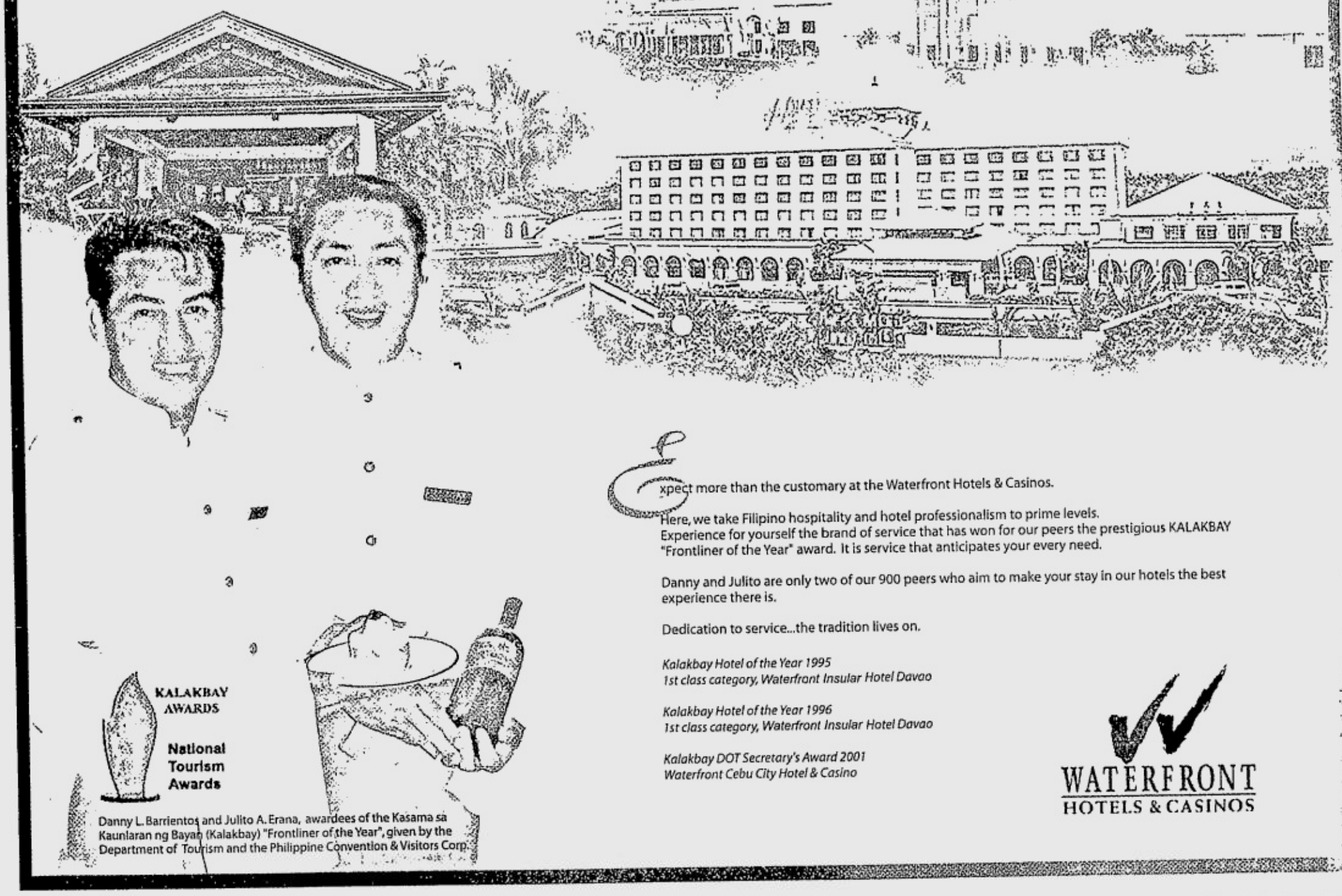

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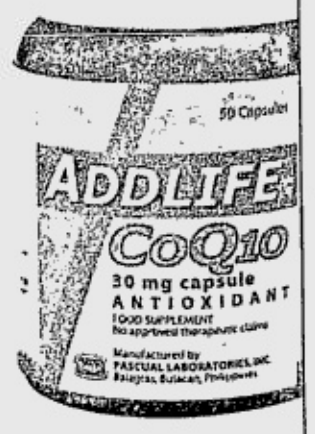

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RP sports brat becomes national treasure

From page A1
in Los Angeles in July.

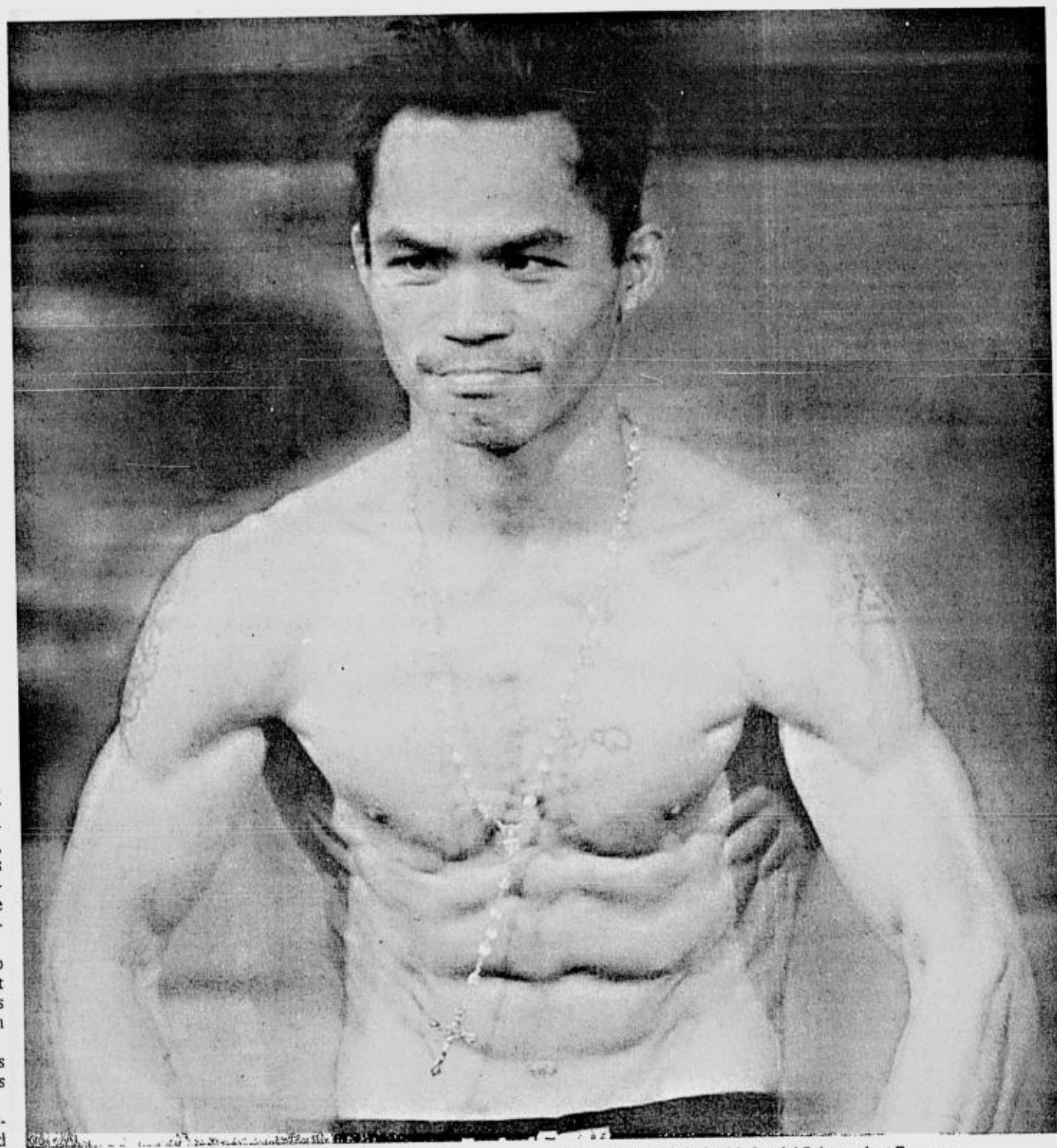
Then the spoiled brat of Philippine sports became a national treasure in November as he stunned the boxing world by demolishing the best pound-for-pound fighter in the featherweight division in 11 rounds at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Marco Antonio Barrera just didn't have a chance.

For almost two hours at midday on Nov. 16, Filipinos ignored the problems wracking the country to cheer in front of their television sets as the southpaw Pacquiao battered the Mexican legend with sustained aggression and stylish ringcraft.

It was a conquest that captivated everyone.

While no world title was at stake, Pacquiao installed himself as the hottest commodity in the 126-pound division with his business managers now sifting offers of megabuck fights in the future.



THE HULK: Manny Pacquiao flexes his abs as he strikes a fearsome pose during the weigh-in for his fateful fight against Barrero. AP

Greater boxer

Indeed, no Filipino fighter has created such a stir in the global arena. A respected columnist, who started his career as a sportswriter, even declared Pacquiao a greater boxer than the late revered heroes Pancho Villa and Flash Elorde.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, after the usual congratulatory message, came up with a P1 million incentive for Pacquiao, whose $350,000 purse (it was later found out he was guaranteed $700,000) was already the biggest single payday for a Filipino pro athlete.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza also gave him a condominium unit and the House of Representatives honored the champion with a Congressional Medal of Honor.

Pacquiao had no inkling this would be the biggest year of his life.

After apologizing to sportswriters who grudgingly accepted his alibi of a bum stomach on the eve of the 2003 PSA Awards Night (reports said he really was not feeling well because he lost a big sum during a billiards match), Pacquiao agreed to display his skills before his countrymen in a promotion dubbed "Bakbakan sa Maynila" last March.

Near-misadventures

Organized by Atienza and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Pacquiao's date with an unheralded Kazakhstan fighter, Serikzhan Yeshmangbetov, at the Rizal Park almost turned into a disaster.

Lugging an extra four pounds in his first fight as a featherweight, Pacquiao had to survive a knockdown in the fourth round before escaping with a TKO win in the next round.

It was this near-misadventure as a featherweight that became one of the worries of Team Pacquiao as he prepared for the 29-year-old Barrera, who had 57 victories in 60 fights, 40 of them inside the distance, and was ranked No. 3 in the world's best pound-for-pound list.

Underdog

While Pacquiao's record of 37 wins in 40 outings that included 29 KOs was nothing to be sneezed at, the Filipino, who weighed 120 lbs against Lucero, climbed the ring a 3-1 underdog.

This time, however, he was boxed to fight for all of 12 rounds by American Freddie Roach, who marveled at how hard the Filipino had whipped himself into shape. And at 125 lbs, all the extra poundage did was add more TNT to the punches of Pacquiao, who delighted his fans no end by dominating Barrera with a nonstop attack that included some rapid-fire shots to the body that one sees only in Fernando Poe Jr. movies.

Sustained barrage

Barrera slowly wilted in the face of the sustained barrage, and when the Mexican's handlers called for a halt of the carnage in the 11th, Pacquiao shed tears of victory even as the whole nation erupted in celebration.

It was the first time Pacquiao needed to go 11 rounds to put a rival away since winning his first international title, the Oriental-Pacific Boxing Federation flyweight crown at the expense of Thailand's Chokchai Chockvivat on June 26, 1997.

That alone underscored the quality of the fighter that Pacquiao hurdled.

High school dropout

Born on Dec. 17, 1978 to poor parents Rosseleo and Dionisia, who moved to General Santos City when he was two, Pacquiao was lured to fistfighting by the exploits of Rolando Navarrette, the original Bad Boy of Dadiangas who went on to become WBC super featherweight crown.

Married to Jinkee Jamora and a father of two boys, Pacquiao has a sister and two brothers, one of whom, Bobby, is the reigning Philippine super featherweight champion.

He was 11 when he fought as an amateur, compiling a 64-win, 4-loss record.

A high school dropout at 15, Pacquiao helped his family by working in a bakery before turning pro on Jan. 22, 1995 with a four-round win over Titing Ignacio in Occidental Mindoro.

It was while fighting several months later in the "Blow by Blow" program in Manila that he caught the eye of Rod Nazario, now his business manager, and trainers Moy Lainez and Lito Mondejar, who later became official members of Team Pacquiao.

Explosive

With his explosive fists, Pacquiao captured the World Boxing Council flyweight title with an eighth-round TKO of Chartchai Sasakul of Thailand on Dec. 8, 1998. He would soon lose the crown to Thai Medgoen Lukchaopormasak due to weight problems on Sept. 17, 1999, but found a new stronghold in the 122-lb superbantam division.

He finally captured the IBF super bantam crown by stopping African Lehlo Ledwaba in the sixth round on June 23, 2001 and retained the title with a technical draw in six rounds against Agapito Sanchez in November.

No-show

But the PSA chose billiards ace Efren (Bata) Reyes and woman golfer Dorothy Delasin as its Athletes of the Year for 2001 while giving Pacquiao only the major award in pro boxing. He was a no-show during the PSA awards.

Pacquiao made sure he was around during the PSA Awards last Friday at the Manila Pavilion and the way he hopped from table to table greeting his fans and posing for shots, it was obvious he would be a fixture in future PSA occasions.

With no US visa, Erap seeks another country

From page A1

gued that the Philippine government can vouch for Estrada's US visa application as he is under the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court, neither the government nor Estrada has made any concrete moves to jointly seek a US visa.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself has said she would be happy if Estrada could secure a US visa so that his medical treatment could get under way.

But she said she recognized that approving or disapproving a visa application was the prerogative of a sovereign state.

Not meddle

"For humanitarian reasons, I would be happy if they [the US] can give Estrada a visa. But we don't want to meddle," she said.

The President stressed that her position on Estrada has not wavered since July 2001, when she expressed compassion for her detained predecessor in her State of the Nation Address.

"My policy is not a secret. I said the wheels of justice must turn but nonetheless, as early as July 2001 I said that the personal circumstances or situation or comfort of President Estrada should be considered ... for the sake of the multitude of people who see their sufferings in his," the President said in Filipino.

"So for the sake of the majority who think that way, we are trying to make President Estrada as comfortable as possible. I have not changed my position on that," she said.

The Sandiganbayan that is trying Estrada on plunder and corruption charges reversed itself and allowed the disgraced leader to fly to the US this month to have his surgery with the physician of his choice. But the court ordered Estrada to return to the country by March 31.

The Dec. 23 resolution was a reversal of the court's June 5, 2002 ruling denying Estrada's earlier petition to be allowed to travel to the US.

Backtrack

Since the time the court handed down its approval, however, Estrada has indicated through opposition leaders that he was inclined to postpone his operation and his departure for the US to campaign for his bosom buddy, Fernando Poe Jr., who is running for president in the main opposition coalition.

Encountering fierce criticism, he backtracked the other day and said he couldn't wait to leave as the pain in his knees was unbearable.

Estrada said he would leave as soon as he could get a US visa. He denied reports that he was running into problems obtaining a US visa.

After a loss, an empty nest expects new arrival

From page A1

girls, Mallory and Megan, now about seven-and-a-half years old.

"Even before AR died, he, Archie and I had already gone to Cribs [at the Industrial Valley in Marikina]," Santiago recalled. "The three of us had picked a baby boy that my sons baptized by themselves as 'Bogart' because they said he looked like a toughie."

Unfortunately, that baby was "not available" for adoption.

"He had already been matched to another family, and I understand that he is now in Australia," Santiago said. "So I continued with our plans. I tried to pick someone who would have a typical resemblance to Archie so that they would look like brothers."

Royal name

The family has decided to take up Santiago's suggested name for the baby, which she asked this reporter not to reveal.

"It's a royal name, but more importantly, it starts with the letter N," like the names of "the two other men in my family," she said. "So he has to be an N as well."

The baby has a second name, which starts with the letter M, "because my two girls are both M," she pointed out.

Spoiled

Mallory and Megan are not twins. "I just dress them alike all the time to emphasize equality," Santiago said. "My sons shamelessly spoiled them."

The girls are equally excited about the baby.

In fact, "they're already disputing on who has prior rights," Santiago said, laughing.

"Oh, they are so intransigent," she added. "Actually, they are slightly offended with me because I have not been able to bring the baby boy home as early as I have promised. They thought that when I arrived from California last week I would bring a baby boy to the house. So I hope that by [this week] I can get him. I just had some details to attend to."

No comparison

Santiago said NM would be "one of my most treasured possessions."

Asked about any promises she would make to the baby, she said: "What I will strive hardest to do is never to compare him with my dead son.

"Never. That is the worst way to mess him up, so I will never compare him. This is not [AR's] life, going on as if nothing happened. [The baby] has his, and he will be treated as a very welcome and cherished member of my family."

Leaving home

Santiago has also been trying to come to terms with the fact that Archie, who turns 33 in April, will be "leaving us very soon."

"He has already taken his own apartment because he cannot afford emotionally to live in our present home where he and his brother had a very devoted friendship," the mother said. "Also, he already has a girlfriend and he's dedicated to her. So he's already looking forward to his own life."

Joyful noise

With NM's expected arrival, Santiago is confident that the family's "big house would soon be joyfully noisy again."

She said that when AR—whom she described as her "soulmate"—was alive, he and Archie would hang out in the basement, and "they would probably be chasing each other like puppies or exclaiming over points earned during computer games."

"I could hear them upstairs," she recalled.

Silence was then her "highest priority," in addition to "solitude, privacy, introspection and self-analysis."

But now, she said, "the silence bugs me."

Mellowed

The former immigration commissioner, agrarian reform secretary and regional trial court judge claimed to have mellowed and become more laid-back.

"It's true," she insisted, and let loose with her trademark laugh.

By her own admission, Santiago was once a very tense mother who identified with the destinies of her children.

"It is said in some psychology books that by the age of eight, a baby's character has already been plumbed normally by the mother," she said. "That is why, following that principle, I really took time when I was a younger mom not to be assigned abroad or not to hold too many jobs down because I wanted to be the child's formative influence until he was eight."

Near-absolute power

In youth, "a mother thinks that she can control the world because her power over a baby is almost absolute," Santiago said. "She can turn a baby exactly into the kind of creature that she wants."

She said that when she was younger, "I thought that if I had already succeeded in forming the child's character, he would then march off to the horizon, responding to life's challenges as I had pre-programmed him."

Life's lessons

Santiago also acknowledged that in the past, "I thought I was the creator and my creature would perform as I had programmed him."

"I guess this is the so-called arrogance, or maybe the ignorance, of youth," she said. "But that is my lesson. You do what you can for the child, but at a certain stage you just have to let go and let life work on that child."

Santiago said her son's death made her realize that "we do not control life."

"So I hope that with this baby, I don't have to be very tense and to try to be a perfect mother," she said. "Because even if I could achieve that, things might turn out the opposite as what I had started out."

Predestiny

Away from the domestic scene, Santiago said she was also feeling "a little excited" about her joining the administration's senatorial ticket for the May elections.

"It will be a complete change from the company that I have kept for the past three years," said the staunch ally of deposed President Joseph Estrada. "I'm facing the prospect of dealing with certain issues that may crop up during the campaign and that right now nobody can predict."

But as far as the outcome of her candidacy is concerned, "my attitude is one of absolute equanimity," she said, adding:

"With my son's death I became convinced of predestiny. I believe that despite free will, God in His mission has predestined everything. So whether I win or lose, life will always be in the hands of God.

Supernatural force

"And just like motherhood, a political candidacy is not really determined by the individual, as much as it is determined by an external supernatural force that we call God because there is no better name.

"Just like in maternity, I am very relaxed because it's all a done deal."

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US declares Saddam prisoner of war

WASHINGTON—The United States has formally declared Saddam Hussein, held by US forces since his Dec. 13 capture, an enemy prisoner of war, the Pentagon said on Friday, and the International Committee of the Red Cross asked to see Iraq's former president as soon as possible.

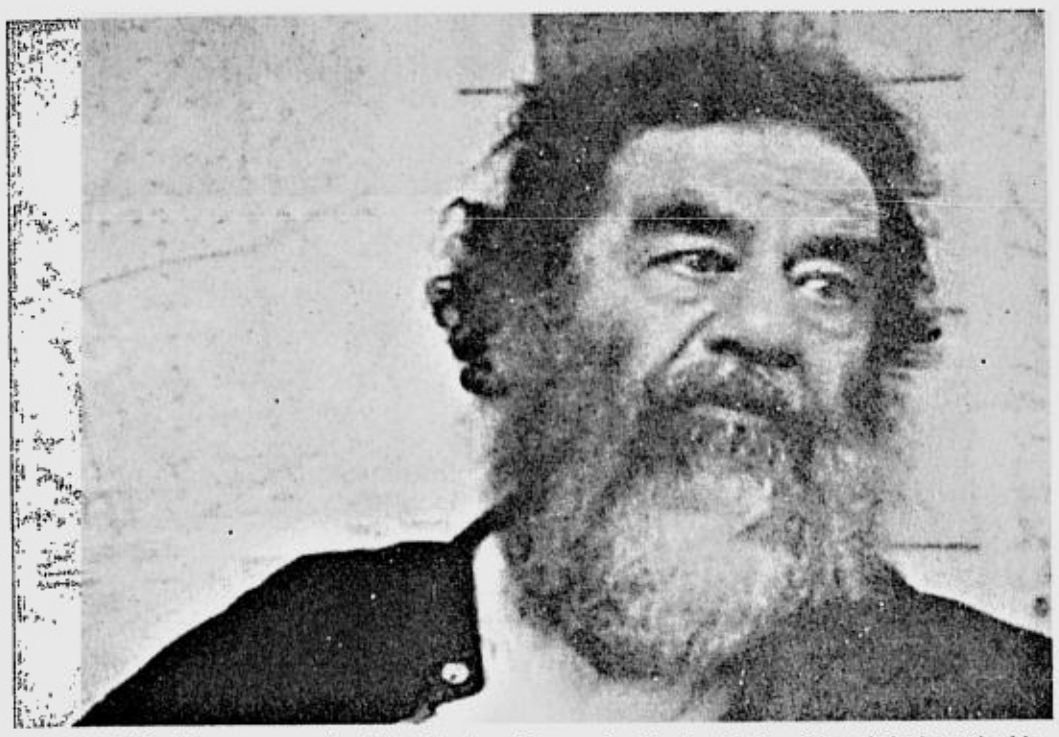
Prayer services ended in tragedy when a bomb exploded outside a crowded mosque northeast of Baghdad killing five and wounding 38, while Iraq's Arab and Kurdish politicians struck a tentative deal on the oil-rich nation's future shape.

In the tense northern city of Kirkuk, two Iraqi policemen were killed by mistaken US gunfire late Friday, according to the police chief, while a coalition contractor was gunned down on a roadside north of Baghdad.

The Pentagon's first official statement about the 66-year-old captive's legal status means Saddam is due a host of rights spelled out by the Geneva Convention on treatment of prisoners of war.

"Saddam's status is that he is an enemy prisoner of war. The lawyers have determined that," chief Pentagon spokesperson Lawrence Di Rita told reporters late on Friday, adding Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was informed of the determination earlier in the day.

The treaty requires that the International Committee of the Red Cross have access to POWs. Christophe Girod, the senior ICRC official in Washington, said the organization was speaking with US officials in Baghdad about gaining access to Saddam to check the conditions in which he is being held.



POW STATUS with accompanying rights: Captured former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is shown in this Dec. 14, 2003 file image from television footage provided by the US Department of Defense. AP

The Geneva Convention requires that POWs receive humane treatment, including not being subjected to intimidation or insult and not being turned into a public curiosity. It requires that POWs be given proper food and freedom, be free to exercise their religion and receive monthly pay depending on rank.

Air Force Maj. Michael Shavers, a Pentagon spokesperson, said Saddam was being given all the rights due him under the treaty.

"The bottom line is that Saddam Hussein was the leader of the old regime's military forces, and therefore he was a member of the military, and he was captured. That makes him an enemy prisoner of war," Shavers said.

"It's unusual that you have such a high-ranking enemy prisoner of war. So I think we just wanted to make sure that we had carefully thought through all the ramifications," Shavers said.

Di Rita did not rule out the possibility the United States might re-evaluate Saddam's POW status in the future, but declined to say under what circumstances that would occur.

Girod expressed hope the United States would allow the ICRC to see Saddam in "the not-too-far future," perhaps in a few days or weeks. "We don't have any negative signals that we would not have access," Girod said.

Girod stressed the ICRC wanted the meeting "as soon as possible—the sooner the better," but noted the Geneva Convention did not set a specific timetable for such access.

"We are not upset yet," Girod said.

Saddam was seized in a hole in the ground during a raid last month on a farm near his hometown of Tikrit. *Reuters, AFP*

Suspected SARS case linked to civet cats

GUANGZHOU, China—A suspected SARS sufferer in China had been in contact with civet cats, state media said Friday, as reports suggested some of the animals were being clubbed to death, raising the risk of spreading the deadly virus.

Investigations of the suspected Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in a 20-year-old waitress had indicated a link with civet cats, already a prime suspect in the hunt for the virus' source, the China Daily reported.

The officially sanctioned paper cited "insiders" as saying the woman, under quarantine at the No. 8 People's Hospital in southern China's Guangzhou city, had been in contact with the weasel-like animals.

The Yangcheng Evening News reported the woman worked in a restaurant famed for its tasty civet cat dishes.

It was unclear if the reports, repeated in several papers, were based on water-tight scientific proof or were meant to legitimize local authorities' decision to controversially slaughter thousands of the creatures to halt the disease.

The civet cat link is on the agenda of a team of World Health Organization experts in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, on a mission to look into the cause of SARS.

At the same time, the WHO cited anecdotal evidence that civet cats were now being clubbed to death, and warned such methods of slaughter could exacerbate the spread of SARS.

"We've heard anecdotal evidence that some of the animals have been clubbed," said Bob Dietz, a Beijing-based WHO spokesperson. "This puts all the people (involved in killing the civet cats) at risk."

The mass destruction of civet cats—considered a delicacy in Guangdong—began after confirmation this week of the country's first case of SARS in half a year.

Thousands of them have already been killed, mostly by drowning and cremation.

The announcement of the SARS case—since discharged from hospital—sent ripples through the region and the world, as it sparked fears that the virus was about to resurface on a massive scale.

SARS first broke out in China and caused a global crisis last year, killing about 800 people and infecting around 8,000.

The WHO said that while there was no solid proof that civet cats indeed were the source of the confirmed SARS case, there was circumstantial evidence.

"Certainly there is a reason to suspect transmission not just from civet cats, but also from other animals," said Dietz. *AFP*

FUNDING, TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

Manned moon, Mars flights may not take off

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.—US President George W. Bush's expected space initiative to send Americans back to the moon and ultimately to Mars may set some spirits soaring but real-life concerns such as money and a more safety-conscious Nasa could keep it firmly on the ground.

Bush is expected to propose next week a plan to work toward a permanent American presence on the moon and an eventual manned mission to Mars, officials and congressional aides said on Thursday.

It would be a huge boost to US space exploration after the morale-sapping Columbia space shuttle disaster last year.

Some politicians and space experts wondered, however, whether it was mostly about the November presidential election.

A senior Senate Republican aide said the plan gives Bush a "big bold idea" to run on for reelection.

But would the Republican-led Congress fund it?

"Unlikely," said the aide, asking not to be identified by name. "But the president doesn't have to get this through Congress this year. He just needs to put it on the table as part of the agenda for his second term."

"The president is now looking for centrist supporters who may be enthralled by big ideas. This has much less to do about legislative reality on Capitol Hill this year than it has to do with political reality in 2004," he said.

Bush will ask for a 5 percent a year increase in Nasa's $15.5 billion budget beginning in fiscal 2005, the Washington Post reported on Saturday, citing unidentified administration officials.

Additionally, he has sought a major reordering of the agency's spending priorities for the initiative, which would include setting up a permanent base on the moon, the officials told the newspaper.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan declined to give details ahead of next week's announcement. But, without revealing a price tag, he said the cost had been reviewed in the context of the federal budget for fiscal 2005, to be submitted to Congress on Feb. 2.

Democratic presidential frontrunner Howard Dean looked quickly to the bottom line.

"I'm very much in favor of space exploration," Dean said.

"Where is the tax increase to pay for it? We already have a half-a-trillion-dollar deficit. It is not worth bankrupting the country if that's what's going to happen. This president needs to be serious about the budget deficit."

Even if the funds appear—and the big money could be called for after Bush ends the second term he seeks—the technical hurdles are considerable.

Bush's vision includes abandoning winged space planes such as the space shuttle in favor of an updated version of the old Apollo capsule that served Nasa in the 1960s and 1970s, congressional sources said. *Reuters*

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Nokia phone explodes in man's pocket

HANOI—A Nokia mobile phone exploded in a man's pocket in Vietnam's central City of Danang, state media reported Saturday, in the latest such incident to occur.

The unnamed man, who worked for the Ministry of Finance-owned accountancy firm AAC in the city, told the Tuoi Tre newspaper that his Nokia 8310 phone was not in use at the time of Thursday's tiny blast.

"The mobile was in a normal state in my trouser pocket and there were no communication at that time when suddenly I heard a little explosion and my phone became hot," he said.

The man, who suffered no injuries, said the blast caused a thumbnail-sized hole in the handset's front cover and blackened the screen.

He said he had bought the phone with a 12-month guarantee from an official Nokia supplier in April last year for around $335. The man said he had not replaced any parts. *AFP*

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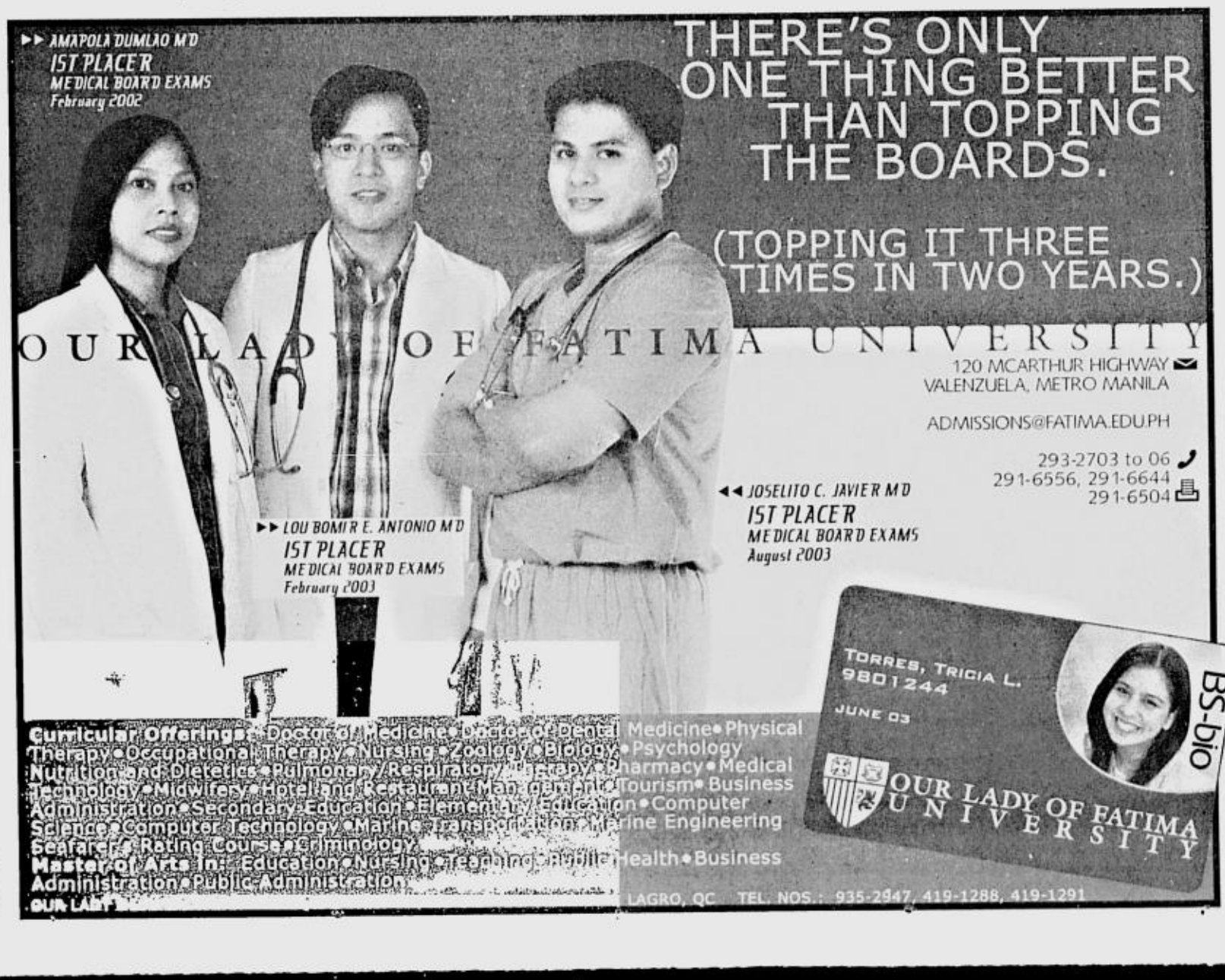

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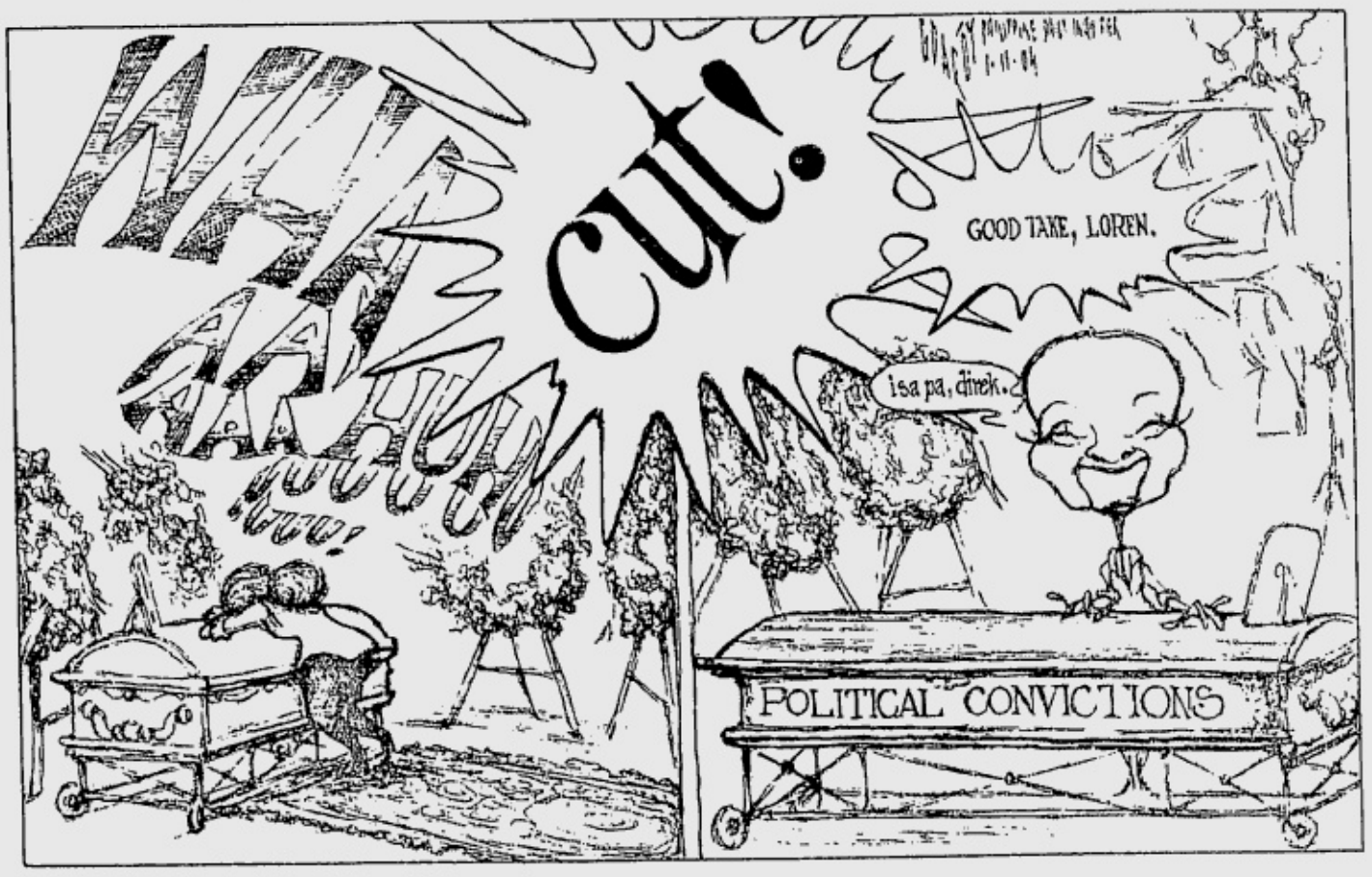

Loss of confidence

EDITORIAL

THE MAY 10 polls are the most crucial since the February 1986 "snap elections," when Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino contested the presidency. It is an outrage that, as in 1986, the Commission on Elections itself has compromised the electoral process once again.

In 1986, with a Marcos-appointed Comelec, the undermining of the process was deliberate. (The famous walkout by the agency's own computer technicians upset by the systematic fraud provided dramatic proof.) Today, with a commission divided between appointees of deposed President Joseph Estrada and President Macapagal-Arroyo, the undermining may be the result of circumstance, of incompetence and willfulness. The outcome, however, is the same: loss of public confidence in the basic democratic franchise.

The Supreme Court is said, by many unimpeachable sources, both within the judiciary and in other branches of government, to have reached an adverse decision on one critical election-related case, that regarding the validity of the contract to automate the elections. If, as the sources claimed, the high court has in fact decided to strike down the contract, the fate of the May 10 exercise will hang in the balance.

The much-delayed automation of the polls, which was test-piloted in the 1996 Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao elections, will once again be put on hold. But election officials who favor a nationwide implementation of the automation mandate insist that the Comelec will need at least four months, or maybe as much as 180 days, to shift back to the manual system of vote-counting. An adverse Supreme Court decision, therefore, may push back election day. In itself this is not a legal puzzler, because the Constitution allows the date (the second Monday of May) to be moved if "provided by law." But the postponement may push back the oath-taking of new elective officials beyond June 30, which is when the term of office of the old ones end. This, without a doubt, would trigger a constitutional crisis.

For this state of affairs, the Comelec itself is mainly to blame.

In the last three years, it has been consumed by internal wrangling. The infighting died down, at least in terms of media coverage, after President Macapagal appointed a smooth-talking politician, ex-Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin Abalos, as commission chief. But it has become clear that the price of political peace came at a steep cost: the mainstreaming of the ill-advised ideas of Estrada appointee Luzviminda Tancangco and her fellow commissioners.

Instead of devoting its attention and resources to poll automation, for instance, the commission insisted on first conducting a completely unnecessary voters' validation exercise. The cost of the folly went beyond the billion pesos the agency spent; it also included the commission's own loss of credibility. Designed, at least on paper, to restore public faith in the country's electoral system by purging the voters' list, the exercise actually undermined it. The lack of information, the chaotic implementation, the low success rate—all these only served to deepen the public's skepticism about the Comelec's competence.

As it turned out, even those who failed to validate their voters' registration cannot be prevented from voting in May. They may find it harder to vote, but they can still vote. Hence, a useless exercise, wasting government funds and commission commitments, fueling public distrust of the entire electoral process.

The agency's on-again, off-again relationship with the Namfrel election watchdog also (unnecessarily) added fuel to the fire. Apparently, Namfrel can conduct quick-count operations in other countries because of its track record, but must pass through the proverbial needle's eye before it can do so again in its own country. That it had to do so reflects the Tancangco faction's hostile view of the NGO.

Lastly, the case before the Supreme Court would not have prospered if the commission had heeded well-meaning advice and heard the alarm sounded by many civil-society groups about the inadequacies of both the automation contract and the winning bidder. Now it is reaping the whirlwind of its own willfulness.

Warts and all

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

MANY of us are familiar with the sentimental film about the rich family's son who falls in love with a beautiful *provinciana* from a poor family. The smitten boy's parents object to the girl because of her lack of education and the social graces. They say he should not marry below his class and instead choose someone more cultured and affluent like him. The boy angrily rejects their objections, however, and marries the ecstatic girl so the two of them can live happily ever after. The movie ends on that romantic note, to the sighs of the enchanted female audience.

The maudlin melodrama has a sequel that is not recorded for obvious reasons. After the euphoria of the honeymoon, the marriage begins to sunder and reveal the defects that were unnoticed or ignored in the ardor and blindness of the couple's love for each other. The bride especially becomes the target of criticism and the cause of the groom's disappointments. She is not, he now realizes, the perfect wife he had imagined she would be. Her academic qualifications now come into focus because she only finished third grade. Her tastes are now found to be vulgar. She is hardly the woman he can proudly present to his friends and associates as his wife.

That story has worrisome similarities to our current politics, where some candidates are accepted at face value, like that entrancing bride, despite their shortcomings and disqualifications for the high offices they are seeking. Fernando Poe Jr. is criticized for being a high school drop-out, but his idolaters claim that academic credentials do not guarantee competence in the discharge of executive duties. Noli de Castro has introduced only one bill since he assumed office more than two years ago, but his supporters say he has been busy with committee work. To their followers, these candidates can do no wrong. Their established lack of education and industry should not be an obstacle to their election this coming May to the two highest positions in the land.

Their apologists suggest that several presidents of the United States who never went to college turned out to be more competent than some of their colleagues with impressive academic distinctions. And anyway, there are interpreters in international conferences who can translate to our uneducated president what is taking place when the proceedings are conducted in English. It does not matter that this happens to be the most popular language in the world today, and one of the official languages used in the United Nations and in most treaties and international conventions. Never mind that it is recognized by our Constitution as an official language for communication and instruction.

We cannot take pride in our president if he cannot speak English like his peers although millions of our people can use that language fluently. Neither can we look up to him if he cannot show that he has been discharging his official duties with the conscientiousness and ability expected of him as the top official in our government. But this fastidiousness is true only of the judicious among us who believe that the president and the vice president should set the sterling example of public service that the rest of the government functionaries should follow. It does not apply to the mindless voters who will accept their worthless candidates warts and all.

I fear that millions of voters will campaign for Fernando Poe Jr. simply because he is Da King of Philippine Movies. It does not matter that he sits on a tinsel throne on the strength of his make-believe staccato punches and rapid-fire pistols. The bullets their idol fires are as blank as their minds, his fists as deceitful as his invincible macho image. They are determined to make him the next President of the Philippines simply because he is the imaginary *Ang Panday* and not worth more than that. Lack of qualifications is the least of their worries as long as they can identify, for all his deficiencies, with the man in Malacañang.

These observations apply as well to Noli de Castro, who is also a darling of the masses. His mammoth appeal is based on his baritone voice, and not much else, which he uses to transfix his listeners as he reads his prepared script in "Magandang Gabi, Bayan." He receives a fabulous fee for doing this in addition to his perquisites in the Senate for doing nothing. He is likely to trounce Loren Legarda in the vice-presidential race because he can identify better with the *bakya* crowd than Loren who was an honor graduate in UP and delivered her news in English, not Tagalog.

In the course of the current campaign, I will be making observations on the various candidates for public office, in criticism or commendation as the need arises. The ordinary citizen can participate in the actual conduct of the government through the exercise of his right to vote and his freedom of expression and thus truly become, in the words of Justice Laurel, "an individual particle of sovereignty." Unfortunately, many of our people are no more than "dumb driven cattle," as Longfellow might describe them, and could cast the deciding vote next May.

Fade away

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

FOR years, the church had a lousy sound system. One Sunday morning, the priest happily announced that by next week they will have a new public address system. The microphone and the wiring were paid for with church funds. Then he added, "The loudspeaker was donated by the mayor in memory of his wife."

* * *

The Lord's baptism (Lk. 3, 15-16, 21-22) should remind us also of our own baptism which carries with it a privilege and a responsibility. Through baptism, we became children of God and members of the church. Through baptism, we became disciples of Christ, with a mission to help spread the kingdom of God. By our person and by the lives we live, do we remind people of God's righteousness and love? Are we living reminders of God's loving presence in our midst?

* * *

Recently, we were at the funeral Mass of 21-year-old Miko Sotto. It was a very painful time for the family especially for his mother Ali, for only a mother can really know what it is like to lose a son. According to Ali, what gave some meaning to Miko's death was that somebody can see today because of Miko's eyes which were donated to the eye bank. Miko lives on. He did not die in vain. Likewise, through baptism, Jesus lives on, He did not die in vain, if we continue to become His eyes, His ears, His hands, and His heart in the world.

* * *

John the Baptist was a mystery to the people. "Could he be the Messiah?" Categorically and clearly, John made his statement that he was not the one. John was honest and uncompromising. He was not a pragmatist, nor was being popular and winnable in his agenda. He was not a manipulator or an opportunist. He was not a jumping frog or a flying butterfly. Want to know who John the Baptist was? Take a look at the breed of politicians all lined up now, and you'll get a clear picture of who John the Baptist was not.

* * *

Having been a basketball player when I was younger, I learned the importance of teamwork, the importance of passing the ball. All the shots are important, but there was one shot that was very effective, the fade-away shot. I wish all our politicians learned this shot. Then we will have hope in this country. John the Baptist knew how to fade away. You and I, too must learn to fade away and let go gracefully of things not meant for us.

* * *

Our baptism should make us go beyond our family, party and circle of friends. We must see the big picture. We must not limit our blessings to ourselves. We must reach out. The more the better. Reminds me of the story of a little boy who drew a picture of the Holy Family riding on an airplane. When the teacher asked him why there were four persons in the picture, the little boy said: "That's Jesus, Mary and Joseph." "But who is the fourth person?" the teacher asked. "Oh, that's Pontius, the Pilot," was the little boy's reply. Have you brought people closer to God? Have you "recruited" people to become members of God's family?

* * *

The presence of the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a dove, is a reminder that God is present, He knows everything, and He sees everything. This reminds me of another story about a boy who had a bad habit of sucking his thumb. To break the habit, the mother pointed out to a fat man and said he has such a big stomach because he sucked his thumb. The next day, the boy saw a pregnant woman. Asked why he was staring at her, the boy grinned and said "I know what you've been doing!" Politicians, and all you who think you can get away with your lies and pretenses, remember, God knows, and we will know what you are doing.

* * *

Jan. 15 is the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen who was canonized last Oct. 5. I just received a testimony from XVD Bobby Mendiola about what he claims is a miracle that happened to his brother-in-law, Edgar Villafuerte, who was given six months to one year to live due to cancer last March 2003. Bobby and wife Len asked continuously for St. Arnold's intercession. Last Jan. 6, Edgar sent word that he is well, and there are no traces of cancer. Along with the physical healing came the healing of relationships in Edgar's family, in Edgar himself and in his relationship with God. The miracle of a saint does not end with his/her canonization. All the more they continue and abound.

* * *

You are invited for a one day and a half experience for widows, separated and single parents at the Good Shepherd Convent, Aurora Boulevard, Jan. 17-18, 2004. Please contact 6331965/7231515/9283494.

* * *

You are also invited to send your "angel thoughts" to Deedee Siytangco's column and TV Program to help inspire people. Send to DEE Angels Thots 091670002424.

* * *

A moment with the Lord

Lord, help me to learn how to let go and fade away gracefully for you. Amen.

It makes me wanna cry

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

WHENEVER disaster strikes in any part of the country as with the landslides which recently hit southern Leyte, the man on the spot is retired Air Force Gen. Melchor Rosales. As civil defense administrator, he heads the National Disaster Management Center and part of his responsibility is to oversee rescue and relief operations in the affected areas. This means emergency measures for food, shelter and clothing, and coordinating the efforts of all government agencies, NGOs and international aid organizations. One is reminded of the terrible earthquake which recently devastated the city of Bam in Iran, claiming more than 30,000 lives. Rosales, the baron of PMA Class 1968, was head of the Air Force's Tactical Operations Command (TOC) before closing out his military career as superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy.

Last Tuesday was Mel's birthday which coincides with the Feast of the Three Kings (Melchor, Gaspar and Balthazar). A number of friends joined him for dinner including retired Supreme Court Justice Emilio Gancayco who, at age 82, is still spry and healthy in spite of having undergone a quadruple heart bypass operation only last year. When the doctors took out some varicose veins from his leg for the procedure, they found them in excellent condition despite his advanced age. He attributes this to one hour of brisk walking every morning for the last couple of years, clean living and a lifestyle of moderation. Gancayco is currently president of the Century Club, an organization of mostly retired folks who do their morning rituals at the Quezon Memorial Circle. Their objective is to reach the century mark in their lives and by his looks, the good justice should have no trouble attaining this goal.

Incidentally, Justice Gancayco was the head of the commission, set up by President Fidel Ramos, to investigate the Flor Contemplacion case involving an OFW who was executed in Singapore several years ago. Prior to his appointment to the high court, he was presiding justice of the Court of Appeals.

Also among the guests were two former defense secretaries, Orlando Mercado and Angelo Reyes. Just to refresh our memories, both were at one time close associates of former President Estrada who turned against him at Edsa Dos. One is attempting a political comeback as a senatorial candidate; the other is backing down from a career in politics, possibly a victim of political expediency. After turning his back on Erap, Orly Mercado joined GMA briefly then left because he couldn't stand the company of some people in her administration. Apparently, he has had a change of heart in time to make the Lakas senatorial slate. On a recent talk show, Mercado was saying that any verdict on his defection from the Erap camp should best be left to future historians. In the meantime, he is offering once again his services.

In the case of Angie Reyes, he may be experiencing re-entry problems from the rarefied atmosphere of political status and power. It's a steep drop from AFP chief of staff and defense secretary to head of an anti-kidnapping task force. Any way you look at it, it's not the best job for an AIM and Harvard graduate.

Angie joined our table that evening and in jest, noted that in earlier days, he would be seated and the food would come. He then stood up and walked to the buffet table to serve himself. I wanted to tell Angie that in this life, there are two sure signs of your loss of power and prestige. The first is people don't return your phone calls immediately and when they do, they usually begin with some lame excuse about being busy for the last few days. Which means your call was not considered important enough. The second indication, which is even more telling, is when you have to line up yourself at the buffet table.

Power is intoxicating but fleeting, so it is important to keep one's feet on the ground when everyone around is sucking up to you. Angie may have been joking and I know he's got a great sense of humor, but there is a lot of bitter truth in what he was saying.

Incidentally, Mel and Millet Rosales are proud parents of a lance corporal in the US Marine Corps who served in Iraq and has just signed up for another tour of duty in the service.

* * *

The latest Newsweek calls him "The New Mahathir." Thaksin Shinawatra, prime minister of Thailand, is Asia's iron-fisted reformer and today his country has the second-fastest growing economy in the world (6.3 percent) after China. He is forecasting 8 percent GNP growth this year and 10 percent in 2005. He has been criticized by human rights groups for the deaths of more than 2,000 suspects in the war on drugs but his strong stance on law and order has led to economic recovery which enabled Thailand to repay its IMF bailout loan ahead of schedule. As I mentioned in an earlier column, this former police colonel must be doing something right.

Recently, on Thai Constitution Day, Thaksin said: "Democracy is a good and beautiful thing, but it is not the ultimate goal. It is just a tool... The goal is to give people a good lifestyle, happiness and national progress." Considering the ongoing circus in our political life which passes for one of the blessings of democracy, the accomplishments of our Thai neighbor make me wanna cry.

LOTR as analogy and memory

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TIMED for the worldwide release of "The Return of the King," the third and final installment of the movies based on JRR Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings," National Geographic Channel has been airing a special that seeks to situate the trilogy of novels in the historical and social milieu of Tolkien's time, while comparing themes, characters and situations in the books with "real" monarchs, leaders, wars and battles and turning points in history.

The daring final battle during which Aragorn leads the combined forces of Rohan and Gondor to the very gates of Mordor to face Sauron's huge army of Orcs, for instance, is compared with the gallant air battles that British and allied pilots waged against the invading Nazis. Grossly outnumbered but rarely outgunned, the RAF managed to turn back the Germans, frustrating Hitler's determined campaign to dominate all of Europe.

Frodo and Sam's friendship, which in the beginning is based on Sam's servitude to "Master Frodo" but evolves into a kinship of equals, is compared to the ties between Sir Edmund Hillary and his sherpa guide, Tenzing Norgay, as well as to Louis and Clark, the intrepid adventurers who spent a year trekking through the frontiers of America and in effect "opening up" the continent for settlement.

Even the machinations of Wormtongue, who manages to turn the King of Rohan into a blithering puppet with his lies, deceptions and delusions, are compared to the havoc that Rasputin created within the court of the Russian Czar, indirectly hastening the monarchy's disintegration and the triumph of the Communist Revolution.

* * *

IT'S all very fascinating but sometimes it seems the creators are straining at their analogies, seeking the merest thread to connect a passage from LOTR to an historical figure or event to validate their thesis. Which is, I suppose, that Tolkien either borrowed from history and his environment, or used, consciously or not, archetypes and racial memory to populate his books.

But then, every writer does that. Even works of fantasy and science fiction are based, somehow, on the author's experiences. Works of pure imagination, I would think, are in fact more deeply autobiographical since the author has no other place to draw from but memory and personal fantasy, based on the deepest yearnings of one's heart.

Maybe that's why Tolkien had always protested the view that his most famous work could or should be read as an extended analogy for the history of Great Britain during the First and Second World Wars. His novels, after all, harken to universal themes and resonate with the deepest fears, hopes and wishes of all humankind. Otherwise, why would Filipinos, with no history of a monarchy, take to LOTR in such great numbers and with such fervent devotion? I can't believe it's just the hype or special effects. The movies stirred long-dormant feelings in us, somehow.

* * *

ALL over the books, and highlighted in the movies, are insights about the human condition—even if these are taught by Hobbits, Elves or Ents.

Of all the characters, the most fervent "love" is not that between Aragorn and Arwen but of Gollum for his "preciousss," the ring that mesmerizes and corrupts its wearer so it could return to its evil maker. But in his feverish desire to get the ring back, Gollum ends up facilitating its destruction, battling Frodo for the ring when the Hobbit momentarily succumbs to the ring's corrosive seduction. If Gollum had not showed up to try to grab the ring from Frodo, the Hobbit could have simply walked away with the One Ring, ending up like Gollum did, consumed with and destroyed by desire, and leaving the road open for Sauron to regain his power.

I was moved tremendously by the scene during Aragorn's coronation, when he finds the four Hobbits among the crowd and, as the four prepare to kneel before him, the new King, he stops them and declares: "You bow to no one," at which everyone else, from humans to Elven royalty, kneel in homage to the small people. That's something to remember from these movies: sometimes, even the small and the weak are capable of greatness and heroism.

* * *

IF you've already seen "The Return of the King" and read through this column without shuddering, or especially if you wanted to wring my neck while reading it, then you're a certified "ringwraith." As such, you are part of a growing legion of Pinoys obsessed with or at least hopelessly besotted by worlds of imagination and adventure, of fantasy and the fantastic.

You'll also be quite at home at "A Long Expected Party," the Second Philippine Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention, to be held Jan. 17 and 18 at the Power Plant Mall of Rockwell Center, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Hosted by the Philippine Tolkien Society and sponsored by The New Worlds Alliance together with Fully Booked and Solar USA, the convention is a showcase of exhibits, seminars, contests, music, film screenings and booths selling merchandise and souvenirs of such franchises as Frank Herbert's Dune, Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Angel, Harry Potter, The X-Files, The Matrix, Star Wars, Star Trek, Smallville, and of course The Lord of the Rings.

During these two days of the convention, you can watch performances, take part in contests, sign up with the group of your choice, and just get caught up in the mania as all your fellow Trekkies, Slayers, wizards and muggle friends "celebrate the great pursuit of fandom, Pinoy style."

The New Worlds Alliance is composed of Aegis (The Alliance of Eclectic Gamers and Interactive Storytellers), Pinoy Fremen, Pinoy Harry Potter, Pinoy Slayers, Pinoy X-Philes, Star Wars Philippines, The Matrix Philippines, The Talon, The Philippine Tolkien Society, and Via Astris Inc.

The middle class and the poor

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

TWO major forces determine the political life of the country today: the poor and the middle class. One decides the outcome of elections, the other decides the fate of administrations. Their aspirations for a better life have made them conscious of the power they can wield. United, they can change the system. Divided, they become tools of conservatism.

The dying years of the Marcos dictatorship saw the emergence of an articulate middle class committed to the ways of modern democratic governance. The vanguard of this class is what we today call "civil society." It made its debut as a reform constituency immediately after the 1983 Aquino assassination, and demonstrated its awesome power by taking down Marcos in 1986 and Estrada in 2001. Marcos and Erap bore the brunt of this modernist militancy. But in fact, every president since Marcos has come under attack by the middle class.

Today, no president, regardless of how he or she comes to power, can govern this country effectively without the active support of the middle class. The conditions for this support are straightforward and clear—firm commitment to the dismantling of *trapo* control of the nation's affairs, reorganization of the economy so as to make it dynamic, equitable and free from oligarchic manipulation, and professional and rational administration of our public and collective life.

Taking a dim view of electoral politics in the country, the middle class is typically squeamish about running for public office, but it does not hesitate to march into the streets to make its sentiments heard. Its activism however is weakened by the lack of sustained follow-through. It folds its banners as soon as a crisis has passed, leaving the traditional politicians to mismanage the political investment they have made.

Less organized and less politicized are the poor of our society who have grown in number. Gripped by ignorance, mesmerized by mass media, and paralyzed by poverty, they are incapable of seeing beyond their personal troubles. They do not make a connection between their personal situations and the social structures that constrain their life chances. They seek solutions in patronage and repose their faith in the all-encompassing power of charisma. The relief they get from their persistent problems is short, limited and illusory.

They want change, but their individual powerlessness keeps them timid. They would rather wait for a messiah than seek strength in collective action. Their occasional attempts at self-organization are often marred by personal and sectoral interests that leave them open to divide-and-rule tactics. Yet because of their size and the urgency of their aspirations, the poor constitute the most important force for genuine social reform.

A politicized middle class could be the key to the transformation of the poor into a potent force for peaceful and meaningful change. Through popular organizing and education, and through the formation of mass-based political parties, they can help the poor recover their voices and expand their participation in the nation's life. This is, however, not as easy as it seems. Middle class movements are discovering how difficult it is to politicize people who are perennially hungry and desperate. They now know that organizing does not go very far unless accompanied by concrete action to address basic needs. Yet the latter is a task that only a few can perform because of the tremendous resources it demands.

The net result of this is that middle class advocacy has tended to be confined to governance issues—corruption, peace and order, rational administration—with little to say about the structural causes of the worsening poverty situation. Over time, the resentment of the poor ripens into animosity against modernity itself and a rejection of any rational approach to public administration. And as the gap between the classes increases, middle class fear of the poor also rises.

This polarization came to an ugly point in the contest between the Edsa II and Edsa III forces. Demagogues from both sides of the people power divide cynically and irresponsibly exploited the latent fears and resentments of an agitated public in their pursuit of political ambition. In the absence of an alternative around which the middle class and the poor could unite, the traditional political operators reaped all the gains from the nation's political upheavals and elections.

Today the same politicians are chanting the mantra of unity and reconciliation in order to accommodate shameless defectors from both sides. This has left their respective constituencies confused about the meaning of the political values they had championed. This barefaced opportunism has exacerbated the public dislike for politicians. But, more important, it has provoked disenchantment with electoral politics that makes the extra-constitutional road to political change attractive once more.

Surely there is an alternative to an electoral landscape dominated by entertainment personalities and traditional politicians. However, this will not miraculously emerge from a mere shift to the parliamentary system. It has to grow from the patient and sustained effort of middle class activists working hand in hand with organic leaders of the poor to create a solid constituency for reform. The objective is to build a just and prosperous nation, but this cannot be achieved without an enduring political party. Now is the time for the middle class to put its money where its mouth is.

* * *

Comments to randolf@pacific.net.ph

Weighing the Bush Doctrine's efficacy

NEWS ANALYSIS

Brian Murphy

ATHENS, Greece—Backers of the hard-charging Bush administration claim they are on a roll.

Saddam Hussein is behind bars. Libya is shedding its outlaw image. India and Pakistan resumed air links Friday as part of peace overtures in strategic south Asia. Syria is warming to US ally Turkey.

But critics of the so-called Bush Doctrine say it does not deserve credit and actually undermines the cooperation needed to curb terrorism and conflicts.

The opinion about US President George W. Bush's impact abroad shows no signs of shrinking in the year voters will decide whether to give him a second term. Almost every public forum around the world—editorial pages, talk shows, the Internet—buzzes with critiques of US policies.

And these days there's much to examine.

"True, many things are happening, but it would be a huge stretch to say the Bush policies are making them all happen," said Jonathan Stevenson, a diplomatic analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

But the White House is staking claim to many of the developments as offshoots of the Bush Doctrine: sharp-edged diplomacy and the understanding that the Pentagon's radar is not only tuned on messy Iraq.

"We enter 2004 in an interesting arrangement, if I can use that word," US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Thursday in Washington. "We saw a lot of things happen over the last few months."

Commentators and experts are now studying the fallout to see how much credit should go to Bush.

"There's a kernel of truth about the Bush Doctrine being responsible," said Ted Carpenter, a strategic analyst at the Cato Institute in Washington. "It's a kernel. It's not the whole truth."

There's widespread agreement that the Iraq war perhaps spooked Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi into making surprising concessions.

Last month, he abruptly renounced efforts to build weapons of mass destruction and opened arms facilities to international inspection.

Then on Wednesday another potential shocker: Israel media reported that Libyan and Israeli envoys have held meetings in recent months. The reports—denied by Libya—said one of the meetings included Gadhafi's son.

Finally, Libya signed on Friday a compensation accord worth US$170 million with families of victims of a 1989 French passenger jet bombing over Africa that killed all 170 people aboard.

But the Libyan shifts are not just motivated by fear of US military power and predate the Iraq war, analysts say. They also came garnished with a tempting carrot: the possible lifting of economic sanctions.

"It would be wrong to say what happened in Iraq or the whole idea of putting military pressure on some regimes is completely counterproductive," said Thanos Dokos, director of studies at the Hellenic Foundation of European and Foreign Policy in Athens.

"But if not combined with diplomacy and economic incentives it doesn't make much sense."

Gadhafi's gestures opened a torrent of commentary on political websites.

"A failure," one writer called the Bush Doctrine.

"There are upsides... look at Libya," went another entry.

Any rapprochement between Israel and Libya—a self-styled leader of pan-Arab causes—could have deep repercussions around the Middle East, where Saddam's downfall is apparently rearranging priorities.

Syria has cautiously offered to consider restarting peace talks with Israel. Syrian President Bashar Assad also visited neighboring Turkey—a longtime US ally and Nato member—in a possible effort to reach out to Washington and Israel.

"The presence of US troops in Iraq is one of the factors that have led to improved relations (with Turkey)," Syrian political analyst Imad Fawzi al-Shueibi said.

Iran—another neighbor of Iraq—also has offered some recent compromises.

On Tuesday, Iran and Egypt decided to resume full diplomatic ties, which were severed in 1979 after the Camp David peace treaty with Israel. In December, Iran signed a protocol allowing UN inspectors to search Iranian nuclear facilities without notice or restrictions.

Iran has its eye on the possible payback: resuming free trade talks with the European Union, whose lucrative market will expand to 25 nations in May. The EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, plans to begin a two-day visit to Tehran on Monday.

The Iranians, some analysts say, made a deft political play. They used the EU's policy of engagement against the relative inflexibility of the Bush Doctrine. Washington cut ties with Iran in 1979.

"Europe was convinced that you could do business with Iran (and) that you did not have to follow the US policy," said Sergio Romano, a former Italian diplomat and columnist for the Corriere della Sera newspaper.

There's also only faint evidence of the Bush Doctrine in efforts to end friction between nuclear powers Pakistan and India—which came to the brink of war in 2001 over the disputed Kashmir region.

The two nations are scheduled to open talks next month. On Friday, commercial air service resumed between the countries after a two-year halt.

"There was a sense of both sides that it was too risky to remain in a state of tension," said London-based regional analyst Rahul Roy-Chaudhury.

Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is a crucial anti-terrorism ally for Washington. Musharraf has survived three assassination attempts—including two in the last month. Talks about Kashmir could open also expand efforts to root out Islamic extremists.

Pakistani forces this week began raids in tribal areas near the Afghanistan border, considered to be one of the main suspected hideouts for Osama bin Laden and other top al-Qaida fugitives.

"There's a widespread perception of the limitations of the US approach," said John Palmer, political director of the European Policy Center in Brussels, Belgium. "There are some signs that the US is beginning to doubt whether it has got the strategy right." *AP*

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Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

TALK of the TOWN

Is TV producing our leaders?

Whoever wins as vice president, "ABS-CBN is the winner," Senate President Franklin Drilon said. Drilon was referring to Senators Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda, both of whom were newsreaders of Channel 2, the television network of the Lopez-owned broadcast giant ABS-CBN, before they became senators.

De Castro, known as Kabayan, is the running mate of President Macapagal-Arroyo of the K4 coalition while Legarda is the running mate of actor Fernando Poe Jr., standard bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Their news programs on national TV helped them top the senatorial elections—Legarda in 1998 and De Castro in 2001. Even before they filed their certificates of candidacy early this month, De Castro and Legarda were the leading possible vice presidential candidates in opinion polls.

Malacañang assiduously courted De Castro to be the running mate of Ms Macapagal in the hope that his popularity would get votes for her.

Government approval of the increases in the water rates of Maynilad, in the electricity rates of Meralco and in the toll rates on the North Expressway, which another Lopez-firm is rehabilitating, weeks before De Castro became Ms Macapagal's running mate was seen as Malacañang's way of persuading the Lopezes to agree to a "GMA-Kabayan" tandem.

Drilon's sentiment is shared by others wary of a vice president from ABS-CBN, who is a heartbeat away from the presidency. What may be good for the media network and its sister companies may not necessarily be so for the people.

Afraid of ABS-CBN

By Katrina Stuart Santiago

For most of the past two weeks, newscasts, newspapers, Internet publications, and e-mail inboxes have been bombarded with expressions of disgust and dismay at how the elections seem to be shaping up—tragedy, farce, theater of the absurd—between a Panday presidential aspirant and a political party named K4, between a Captain Barbell senatorial candidate and the return of the Edsa Dos Most Hated.

Worse, the two top vice-presidential candidates (one of whom would take over should the winning president go the way of Erap) are both media personalities of the ABS-CBN broadcast network, which is owned by the Lopezes, who also own Meralco, Skycable, and Bayantel, among others. And now that Noli de Castro has teamed up with GMA and Loren Legarda with FPJ, it's not surprising that there are screams of "Sell out! Sell out!" I, on the other hand, stare at my bloated Meralco bill in exasperation. For no matter who wins, the Lopezes will have one of their very own up there in the corridors of power to protect their varied business interests.

Scary, brilliant

If it weren't so offensive—and scary—I'd say it was brilliant. Here we have a big business conglomerate that is not only creating TV personalities and making money out of them through the ratings game, they are also having them run for public office, inevitably (it would seem) to serve as their loyal puppets once in government. What a clever way for the Lopezes to acquire political power without any of the Lopezes themselves running for office.

Of course, De Castro and Legarda deny brokering behind-the-scene deals between their presidential candidates and the Lopezes. Even the Lopezes deny it, saying that both De Castro and Legarda have minds of their own and make their own decisions—they are, after all, credible ABS-CBN current affairs people.

Overcharging

Really now. Then why is it that no ABS-CBN personality tackled the issue of Meralco overcharging its consumers? One saw (sees) Kris Aquino saying that it's soooo easy to get your money back, and that this is *kagandahang loob*, in the same way that Ces Drilon has said that making the Lopezes give the *masa* their money back is something that's anti-business. Noli himself has said that there's nothing wrong with the Lopezes as they own legitimate businesses, conveniently forgetting —as does his interviewer from ABS-CBN—that Meralco, for one, has been found guilty of overcharging consumers, which makes it an abusive, if legitimate, business.

Unwittingly or not, this is what the Lopezes have created through ABS-CBN: media people who wear, and profit from, the cloak of "public service and current affairs" but who are obviously equipped, and only allowed, to serve the interests of big business and the cows they hold sacred. They're also allowed to peddle clothes on billboards along Edsa, just as they are allowed to make commercials on TV. Never mind that this contradicts the whole idea of credibility.

Natsit

I often wonder if these "public servants" have even read the basics of Philippine history and politics as exposed by Renato Constantino in 1973, or current books on media by the PCIJ, or natsits (national situationers) on the economy and society by academics who dare dispute government propaganda. I seriously doubt it, as the questions they ask about issues betray them.

De Castro and Legarda are no exception. If anything, they are prime examples of how a media giant can create talents who believe and know nothing but their own propaganda. At least GMA 7 has yet to put together propaganda for Jay Sonza who's running for senator. At least FPJ's the big boss who creates propaganda for himself. De Castro and Legarda have bigger, more powerful, bosses above them to whom they're beholden for all the good propaganda they're getting—propaganda that, in fact, gives them the guts to run and allows them to win.

The fact is "Kabayan" isn't any different from "Captain Barbell" and "Ang Panday" in the sense that all three are on-screen personae that are carried over into real life, not necessarily by the audience. ABS-CBN itself uses "Kabayan" to refer to Noli, a classic example of how it uses its current affairs arm to sell its own—never mind how this contradicts the station's claim to objectivity and public service.

And unless we all consciously campaign against an ABS-CBN government, believe you me, we will get one in the future, with everyone from Noli to Loren, Remulla to Korina, Edu to Dennis Padilla, Herbert Bautista to Aiko Melendez, Boy Abunda to Kris Aquino in the corridors of the land.

And we can all watch our Meralco bills, among others, bloat like there's no tomorrow.

[Santiago (kssantiago2004@yahoo.com) is taking her MA in Philippine Studies at the Departamento ng Filipino at Panitikan ng Pilipinas at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City]

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Parties don't make presidents

By Tony Gatmaitan

To the conspiracy theorists—relax. Once one becomes President, he or she will be more powerful than a Gabby Lopez.

There is nothing necessarily sinister about two rivals for the vice presidency (Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda) coming from the same extended ABS-CBN family.

They earned it. Both topped their respective Senate races in 1998 and 2001. Loren chose to cast her lot with the Lakas party of then President Fidel Ramos, while Noli opted to run as an independent and effectively escaped the confrontation between the Edsa II forces and the angry masses of Joseph Estrada.

The question is, who chose them to be candidates for the Senate, and why? Both were primarily chosen because they were effective communicators to a larger audience. They had charm and charisma. And they were willing to try their hand at politics.

Mega Manila, LL corridor plus 8

To the political operative the nation is basically the Lingayen to Lucena corridor plus eight cities (Naga and Legazpi in Bicol; Cebu, Bacolod and Iloilo in the Visayas and Davao, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga City in Mindanao). The total voting potential is close to 52 percent.

To media practitioners the target market is Mega Manila (Metro Manila, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Rizal, Bulacan, parts of Pampanga and parts of Quezon. These places account for close to 17 million souls or 3.4 million households.

The arithmetic of gathering votes and winning hearts and minds is essentially the same. Except that you have to win them over to your side over a limited period in case of elections.

Imagine the credibility of a person who appears on television five times a week before millions of households. "Just a newsreader ...?" I don't think so.

The broadcaster adds to his or her credibility by doing radio talk shows. Where ordinary citizens call or via text messages appeal to the host for assistance in some government office and get immediate results.

Government appears cold, distant or at best indifferent while the media are there to intercede for the people. They have in effect taken over the function of local officials. And this goes on day in and day out, elections or not. No wonder tradpols (traditional politicians) are out and broadcast media personalities are in.

Hibernation

The impact of these media personalities can no longer be ignored. We saw Senator Noli being assiduously wooed by the Palace. While Senator Loren, reportedly offered to be the running mate of FPJ in exchange for political legitimacy. She was, after all, the majority leader in the Senate and a topnotcher in her own right.

The political parties were nowhere in sight. This was unfortunate. The parties were supposed to dictate the selection process. But the major players chose to ignore them.

As Nelson Navarro, a former columnist, would say, in the Philippines, political parties don't make presidents ... presidents create their own political parties after they win.

Political parties are vital to local elected officials and for such activities as vote protection and to a limited extent in the senatorial race. Under unique circumstances, Noli de Castro topped the race in 2001 as an independent.

The reason for the growing irrelevance of political parties is the practice of going to hibernation after elections and the participation of media, particularly outside Metro Manila, in the affairs of local officials. Media have taken the position of fiscalizer in most instances while politicians wait for the next elections to be on the horizon.

There is no strategic thinking on the part of the political parties at the moment. Right now they need a cadre of new personalities to espouse their views and fight for their convictions. They have to reinvent themselves to be a force in the future. The right to select candidates for public office used to be the prerogative of politicians, but not any more.

There is a Jay Sonza, a Mike Enriquez and a Vicky Morales-Reyno in our future.

(Gatmaitan is president of the Political Economy Applied Research Foundation)

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Bomb suspect comes out to deny role in attack

COTABATO CITY—One of the two main suspects in Sunday's deadly explosion in Parang, Maguindanao had surfaced to deny any involvement in the terrorist attack.

Hadji Suharto Amad, a resident of Bongo Island off Parang, was implicated in the gymnasium bombing that killed 22 people and wounded more than 80 others, after authorities learned he owned the motorcycle used to conceal the explosive.

Speaking over Radio Mindanao Network here yesterday, Amad admitted he owned a motorcycle but denied that the one damaged in the blast was his.

He said it appears that somebody had copied his motorcycle's plate number and used it to implicate him in the incident.

"In fact, I am a government employee. I work in a local court as stenographer. Never in my life that I would encounter like this problem," Amad said from his hiding place in Maguindanao.

Amad was charged for the bombing, which also injured Mayor Vivencio Bataga, along with Parang Councilor Henry Abdul Katab.

As soon as their names came out as main suspects, the duo went into hiding.

Despite his denials, Bataga believes Amad played a great role in the bombing.

Bataga said the two suspects were also behind previous efforts to assassinate him.

"They were the suspects in the April 5 bombing but there was no witness against them. Now that their names was published and aired through radio stations nationwide, definitely they will not allow authorities to arrest them . . . they will hide maybe in Davao City or underneath the dress of their mothers," Bataga said.

Talib Abu, Bataga's rival for the mayoral race of Parang, has called for a deeper investigation of the bombing.

"We are all victims of these act of terror. I myself lost some of my relatives. I call also for vigilance to prevent a repeat even I ask for sobriety among our people," he said in a statement. *Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov't bank says Bulacan loan legal

THE LAND Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has officially affirmed that the use of Bulacan's Special Education Fund (SEF) to secure a P215-M loan to finance the construction of school buildings in the province was legal and above board.

LBP assistant vice president for legal affairs Reynauld R. Villafuerte yesterday issued the statement after the Movement for Responsible Enterprise (More) accused Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz of misrepresentation including alleged fund misuse and technical malversation.

In a one-page memorandum to Villafuerte, LBP legal officer Noel R. Marquez said the SEF may be used as collateral on certain conditions which the provincial government met.

SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS

NPA rebels go on a rampage

COMMUNIST rebels attacked government and other targets with impunity yesterday and Tuesday, destroying a cell site, burning buses and a cargo truck and putting a power plant under siege.

Four Air Force soldiers were killed in the attack on the National Power Corp. Plant in Calaca, Batangas.

While in Dumarao, Capiz, the guerrillas destroyed a cell site of the Globe Telecommunications firm.

The guerrillas burned three buses in Canlaon City in two separate attacks Friday and Saturday.

On Tuesday, guerrillas burned a cargo truck owned by a sugar planter in Silay City, Negros Occidental.

Capt. Norman Zuniega, public information officer of the Armed Forces' Central Command (Centcom) based in Cebu City, said the attacks were the rebels' way of demanding revolutionary taxes.

Airman Ryan Cabilda, Sgt. Edgardo Micos, T/Sgt. Carlito Paraiso and another soldier still unidentified were killed in the Calaca attack.

As the raid on the plant went on, a group of about 50 guerrillas attacked a detachment of the Philippine Air Force's 740th Combat Group also in Batangas.

At least 60 guerrillas were involved in the attack on the Globe cell site.

The guerrillas, many of them women, disarmed two security guards of the Globe Compound in the hinterland village of Ongol-Ilaya, around 5 km from the town proper, according to Senior Supt. Norlito Bautista, Capiz police director.

The rebels who entered the fenced compound poured gasoline at the base receiver system, a steel box three meters tall and five meters wide, before throwing two hand grenades at the small building housing the communications equipment.

The explosion destroyed the equipment and shut off Globe's signal in Dumarao. The signal was still not restored as of noon yesterday.

The Globe tower and that of the Islacom beside it were undamaged by the explosion, according to Bautista. A Smart cellular site, 500 meters from the Globe cell site was not attacked.

Bautista said the rebels withdrew before they could destroy the two towers in the Globe Compound because policemen and Army troops immediately went to the area.

Policemen and troops from the Army's Task Force Panay, 3rd Infantry Division and the 47th Infantry Battalion, exchanged fire with the tail end of the rebel group who fled to the forested areas surrounding the compound. There were no reported casualties from both sides.

Bautista said the rebels were from the Eastern Front Committee and the Central Front Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on Panay Island. They are believed to have divided into smaller groups and fled to hinterland villages of the towns of Dumarao, Dumalag, Tapaz and Cuartero.

The attack could be part of the demand of the NPA's demand for private firms to pay the rebels' "revolutionary taxes," Bautista said. But he said Globe representatives who went to the area did not say if they have received demands from the rebels.

In the past few years, the NPA has burned equipment of private firms that refused to pay the amount demanded by the rebels.

"This could be also part of their (NPA) propaganda campaign to show they are still a force to reckon with in the coming elections," Bautista told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

The CPP and NPA on Panay Island earlier said they would intensify offensives this year. They claimed they have frustrated the military's counter-insurgency campaign last year.

At around midnight of Saturday, another group of rebels attacked the Canlaon City bus terminal and burned three buses owned by the Ceres Bus Company.

Zuniega said the attack was staged by 14 suspected rebels, including a woman, who came armed with an M-60 rifle and other long firearms.

On Tuesday, 10 rebels burned a cargo truck owned by sugar planter Federico Locsin in Hacienda Macamig Uno, Barangay E. Lopez, Silay City, Negros Occidental. *Jhunnex Napallacan, Nestor Burgos Jr. and Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau and Alcuin Papa*

BING GONZALES/PDI PHOTO

WHEEL OF LIFE
A man sets out to fix the most important possession of his life on the streets, his wheelchair, oblivious of passing traffic and the dangers that he faces from speeding vehicles on the streets of Davao City.

Gordon says he'll pursue fight vs Subic port plan in Senate

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Resigned Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon said he does not hate Secretary Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, for approving a $157-million Japanese loan for a port facility at the Subic Bay Freeport.

But now that he is out of the Cabinet, Gordon, who is running for senator, said he will pursue the retraction of the "very expensive" loan despite Malacañang's approval.

Gordon is objecting to a $215-million Subic Port development project at Cubi Point which would be shouldered by a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

Neri told the INQUIRER in December that Gordon felt rebuffed when Neda approved the loan. Neri said the port would cost twice the normal expenditures for a similar facility, but he said the loan would be offset by a P1-billion growth it would generate from Central Luzon.

Gordon resigned from the Cabinet last week, when he filed his certificate of candidacy for senator under the administration party ticket.

He told the INQUIRER that his senatorial bid prevents him from confronting the Palace about the project because he does not want to embarrass President Macapagal-Arroyo at this stage of the political season.

But he said some powerbrokers "sneaked" the project into the Central Luzon regional development council for endorsement, and consequently into the Cabinet for approval, without his knowledge.

"Where are the people crying about the national debt? We are borrowing more money we don't need," he said.

"We really can't tell the Japanese to back off now . . . but maybe after the elections (I can again reiterate how wrong) this project is," Gordon added. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Singson clan dominates politics, polls in Ilocos Sur

VIGAN CITY—Ten members of the influential Singson clan are running for different positions in the province on May 10.

Leading the clan in courting votes from Ilocanos are the province's acknowledged political kingpin, former Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, and his second cousin Rep. Eric Singson.

Chavit Singson, who will run under the administration Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, is facing former Board Member Efren Rafanan of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino-Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (KNP-LDP) and Save Ilocos Sur Alliance (Sisa) president Estelita Cordero of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) in the gubernatorial race.

Eric Singson of the Liberal Party will seek reelection against independent candidate Ernesto Antolin in the province's second congressional district.

Chavit's younger brother, Vice Gov. Jeremias Singson, and Chavit's son, Board Member Ronald Singson, will seek seats in the provincial board.

Vigan Councilor Germalina Singson-Goulhart, Chavit's sister, is seeking reelection.

Ferdinand Medina, husband of Chavit's niece, outgoing Vigan Mayor Eva Marie Singson-Medina, will run for mayor of Vigan.

Eric Singson's wife, Candon City Mayor Grace Singson, is running for reelection against Nicolo German. Eric's brother, Candon Councilor Alfonso Singson, is also seeking reelection.

Board Member Edgardo Zaragoza, Eric's brother-in-law, is running for mayor of Narvacan town, replacing his wife outgoing Mayor Charito Zaragoza.

Zaragoza's son, Zuriel, is seeking a seat in the provincial board.

Three couples are also running for the top two posts in their respective towns in Ilocos Sur.

San Vicente Mayor Jose Tabanda III and his wife Vice Mayor Nancy Tabanda, both of Lakas-CMD, are running for reelection.

Members of the Tabanda clan have been ruling San Vicente for more than 50 years now.

In Magsingal, Mayor Alfonso Favis II, who is in his final term, will run for vice mayor. His wife, Board Member Arlyn Favis, will run for mayor. The couple is running under Lakas-CMD.

Alfonso is unopposed while Arlyn will face Board Member Marissa Oandasan (Nationalist People's Coalition) and Rose Jane Lee (independent) in the mayoral race.

In Salcedo, Mayor Rosario Gironella is seeking her third term while her husband, Leonofre, is running for vice mayor.

Rosario will face her husband's uncle, Perfecto Gironella, in the mayoral race. Leonofre, on the other hand, will face Perfecto's daughter and his cousin, Christina Gironella, in the vice mayoral contest.

In Nueva Ecija, the Joson brothers, incumbent Gov. Tomas III and Mariano Cristino, mayor of Quezon town, are running for governor and vice governor, respectively, under the Bagong Lakas ng Nueva Ecija-Nationalist People's Coalition (Balane-NPC).

Tomas III is seeking his third and final term. Another brother, Vice Gov. Eduardo Joson IV, has opted to return to private life.

Challenging the Josons are former Rep. Julita Villareal for governor and Noemi Manlapas for vice governor. Perennial candidate Dominador Alvaran is also running for governor.

The governor's eldest son, Edward Thomas, who lost in his bid for congressman of the third district in 2001, was fielded for a provincial board member's post.

Rep. Josefina Joson of the first district, wife of Mariano Cristino, is running for reelection. Their son, Eduardo Basilio, 25, is running for mayor of Quezon.

In C. Luzon, four mayoral candidates are virtually assured of victory on May 10 as they are running unopposed, an official of the regional Commission on Elections said.

Lawyer Zoilo Perlas, Comelec regional director, identified the unopposed candidates as reelectionist Mayors Ambrocio Cruz of Guiguinto, Bulacan; Dennis Pineda of Lubao, Pampanga; and Jessu Edora of Masinloc, Zambales; and Eduardo Basilio Joson of Quezon, Nueva Ecija. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Anselmo Roque and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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INQUIRER Mindanao

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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AN ELECTRIC transmission tower lies on its side in Pikit, Cotabato after a bomb explosion brought it down in one of several terrorist attacks in Mindanao. VAL HANDUMONIPDI FILE

Bombings don't know any religion

By Nash B. Maulana
Parang, Maguindanao

OFFICIALS and peacemakers said news reports suggesting that Muslim constituents were trying to isolate the injured Mayor Vivencio Bataga of Parang, Maguindanao, for being a Christian, was "putting religious color" in last Sunday's bloody incident that left over 100 residents wounded or killed.

"I am afraid that a third party is out to divide our people here," Edgar Ramirez, director of the Notre Dame University Peace Center, said of the several attempts on the life of Bataga, during an interfaith peace dialogue among Parang residents.

And even as the mayor blamed his political foes for the incident, he never forgot the welfare of his mixed constituents. He had asked the town council from his hospital bed to pass an urgent resolution to appropriate funds to pay for the hospital bills of the victims, "be they Muslims or Christians."

Councilor Gaudencio "Dodong" Teves said Bataga had specifically given the instruction to him and to two Muslim councilors to sponsor the resolution "as soon as possible."

For the families of the dead, Teves said, the mayor asked the council to donate the cost of coffin for the Christians among them, and a sack of rice for each family of the Muslim victims, "knowing that they don't hold vigil for their dead beyond 24 hours, but that food is served in family gatherings."

"In fairness to Mayor Bataga, he has been able to transform Parang by initiating developments never seen there before," said Dr. Abdullah Dumama Jr., a former resident.

Bias

Dr Kadil Sinolinding Jr., one of the physicians who attended to and operated on the victims, said he was disheartened by a reporter's statement saying in Chavacano that he wished all the victims were Muslims.

In another instance, a female TV reporter from Manila concluded one of her reports with a quote: "Only a dead Moro is a good Moro."

Relatives of the victims lamented some newspaper reports that suggested Bataga's being a Christian seemed unwanted by Muslim residents.

On the contrary, hospital authorities noted that Muslim and Christian patients and their relatives "were mingling and sleeping together, and even sharing each others' provisions in hospital wards. They are showing no signs of discord or hatred against each other."

Teves, who used to help Manila-based journalists in facilitating their provincial assignments in Central Mindanao, appealed to "friends out there to go easy in reporting the incident."

"We should not project this to the outside world as something like leading to a religious war. We have no quarrel here with our Muslim brothers and sisters, and they, too, have nothing against us," he said.

He cited fireman Nasser Akmad, one of those severely injured, who was rescued first by a Christian colleague.

Johnny Gaga-an said that while he was carrying Ahmad to safety, he saw his wife May-Ann rushing out of the scene with their 7-month-old daughter Kayla Marie, who was also wounded. The baby survived a 10-stitch injury in the chin that pierced her gum and another wound that almost cut off her index finger.

May-Ann said she and their two children were at the town's plaza outside the gym, "about 15 meters from where the bomb exploded."

Terrorism

The military said it was not "ruling out" a terror plot behind the bombing. It could also be "politically motivated," according to Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, Armed Forces vice chief of staff. The latter angle was upheld by National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

SEARCHING for clues among the debris of what used to be a jeep shortly before a powerful explosion shred it to pieces. AP

This and previous bomb attacks prompted Dr. Danda Juanday, director of the Bangsamoro Development Agency, to ask authorities to "come up with a definition of terrorism."

"By its (terrorism's) definition in the dictionary, incidents like this one (in Parang) and the one in the mosque inside the National Irrigation Administration compound in Midsayap (North Cotabato), for instance, are considered terrorism because both had sown fear and caused devastation in lives and properties—regardless of whether the suspects or the victims are Muslims or Christians," Juanday said.

A recent forum on terrorism held at the Notre Dame University in Parang noted some "distinctions" in media reporting and their sources on cases of terrorism.

"Unfortunately, reports or their sources don't usually consider terror any bloody attack in which there are mixed Christian and Muslim victims," it said.

'SAGAYAN'

Moros' war dance survives onslaught of foreign culture

By Christine Godinez-Ortega
Iligan City

A SWORD-WIELDING warrior cuts a far more romantic figure than today's soldier armed with a high-powered assault rifle.

A main feature in the war dance *sagayan*, the warrior swinging his *kampilan* symbolizes the country's cultural diversities and gives a glimpse of the Maranao-Maguindanao cultural systems.

Sagayan imitates mythic creatures from the Maranao-Maguindanao epic "Darangen," whose events occurred about four centuries before Islam was introduced to Mindanao.

In his book, "Davao 1890-1910: Conquest and Resistance in the Garden of the Gods" (University of the Philippines' Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2003), Macario D. Tiu traced how the *sinagayan* or *sagayan* became a dance craze among the tribal groups around the Davao Gulf. It later blossomed into a "dance of resistance" during the American occupation.

> The dull slaps of the sword against the wooden shield echo the stamping of heels in rapid succession on the floor.

Tiu also showed how the performers were possessed by the animal spirit known as *labi*. Indeed, to watch a performance of *sagayan* is to experience *labi*.

The Integrated Performing Arts Guild's Melvin Pascubillo has danced the *sagayan* for ten years before local and foreign audiences.

Movements

When performing, Melvin is movement personified. Poised for the attack, he becomes an *usa* (deer) as he sizes up the enemy with side glances. At the same time, his arms, holding a sword and a shield, flap like a rooster's.

The dull slaps of the sword against the wooden shield echo the stamping of heels in rapid succession on the floor. Combined with mincing steps, Melvin moves fast, then slows down to straddle and kneel at regular intervals, projecting alternately, a warrior's offensive-defensive stances.

Suddenly, Melvin jumps and spins in the air, kicking at the unseen enemy. The gold, red, maroon, green and violet, and blue colors of his attire swirls into a spontaneous mist in space, leaving one breathless.

The charged moment is over in minutes. Melvin lands on the floor, hardly making a sound. This gets the audience thinking that the dance, symbolic of a people's culture, can easily disappear because of rapid modernization.

Future generations could miss this experience if the country neglects this aspect of its ethnic cultures.

Lanao contest

In the Lanao area, the *sagayan* can survive modern times since Lanao del Norte organizes an annual *sagayan* contest for the province's different municipalities.

The municipality of Pantar in Lanao del Sur received the P100,000 cash prize for winning first place in the contest during the 44th Araw ng Lanao del Norte. During a quick trip to Pantar to meet the winning group, this writer had three Muslim guides who acted as interpreters—Al Fay Vintola, Sittie Nofaisah Pasandalan and Nur Omar Umpar.

While the contest is laudable because it brings cultural awareness among the youth, some local artists have ambivalent feelings about it.

Ipag Executive Director Steve Fernandez thinks it is similar to tourism-hatched festivals in the country whose purpose is "cultural propagation based on the mardi gras or Ati-Atihan."

However, Fernandez admits that while the objectives of tourism are noble, he finds it "sad" that "these so-called festivals have destroyed their original purpose in an attempt to homogenize and commercialize our country's cultures, hence, losing the nuances of our cultural forms when the function for their being is no longer for prayer or defense but as showoff."

Search for meanings

Over discussions of how problematic the terms "folklore," "tradition" and "authenticity" are in themselves during the interview, ethnomusicologist Joy Viernes Enriquez supports Fernandez's views on such "revivals/festivals" but rationalizes these as attempts to look for meanings in our present lives.

"We revive what has been forgotten from our folklore and traditions," Enriquez said.

In this case, the *sagayan* contest in Lanao has renewed interest in

> The charged moment is over in minutes. Melvin lands on the floor, hardly making a sound.

the "Darangen" among the young. In tracing the dance's origins and giving meaning to the contest, municipal governments have to refer to the story of Princess Lawanen's abduction, her rescue by Prince Mabaning who had disguised himself as a *madem* (mountain man), and her return to the kingdom of Bembaran.

Innovations through blocking and improvisations inevitably seep through because the whole thing is "staged," but, by all indications, the people in Lanao keep to the traditional attire and movements in order to lend authenticity to the contest by respecting tribal sensibilities.

THE SOUTHERN LEYTE-SURIGAO TRAGEDY

(A Geo-hazard Perspective)

The landslides and floods in Southern Leyte and Surigao have been front-page news for most of the past few weeks. The DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau would like to present a geologic assessment of the affected areas so that the public may gain a deeper understanding of the situation and become better prepared.

The Panaon Island of Southern Leyte, down to the Provinces of Surigao and Agusan, were affected by tragic landslides and flooding incidences last 17-20 December 2003 -- phenomena that can be attributed to certain natural occurrences and geologic features of the areas which made them vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

Unusually Heavy Rains

The rainfall in the S. Leyte-Surigao-Agusan-Davao areas extended from 7-10 days, providing more than enough water to soak the rock and soil materials. When the unusually heavy rains came on the 17-20 December 2003, the sudden deluge of water was strong enough to trigger the landslides and the flooding.

In Southern Leyte, average rainfall for the month of December for the past 30 years has been 178 mm. PAG-ASA recorded more than 699 mm. of rain in just three days (18-20 December 2003). Surigao del Norte recorded 1,119.0 mm. from 17-19 December with 566.4 mm. in just one day (18 December 2003), the highest so far in the recorded history of Surigao. In fact, average rainfall for Surigao for the month of December for the past 30 years is 529.5 mm.

Numerous Faults/ Fractures and the Badly Broken Rocks

Numerous faults and major fractures cut through the major rock units in the Leyte-Surigao areas. Because of these, the rocks in the Leyte-Surigao areas are badly broken or fragmented. The fragmented rocks are prone to weathering and erosion. Constant rainfall also led to the accumulation of several meters of topsoil in the lower portion of hills and mountains. When continuous rainfall occurs, water seeps into the fractures of the broken rocks and promotes the deterioration of the rock mass.

If the amount of rainfall is of limited volume and time duration, the soil and rock materials could easily absorb the water. Due to the excessive rainfall however, the rock and soil materials in the area became saturated with water that generated the landslide.

Steep Slopes

Generally, the steeper the slope of an area, the greater is the likelihood of instability. Panaon Island is characterized by *very steep* to *steep* mountain slopes with highest elevation of around 800 m above sea level.

Absence of Effective Vegetative Cover

An effective forest cover tends to stabilize the soil on a slope while its absence promotes erosion and mass movements. The greater portion of Panaon Island is already planted with coconuts as the main crop. Much of the original forest cover had already been cleared due to land conversion starting in the 1920's, leaving large sections pretically demanded.

Brgy. Lutao, Liloan

The Liloan area is located in the Northern tip of Panaon Island. It is bounded to the south and west by steep hills covered with thick soil and mud but with sparse coconut vegetation. The heavy rains saturated the mud and soil to cause the slides.

Brgy. Punta, San Francisco

Brgy. Punta, located about a kilometer south of the town center of San Francisco, sits at the foot of a hillside with relatively steep slopes. Prior to the landslides, coconut trees planted on weathered silty soil showed indication of *"creep"*, a natural phenomenon that is an indicator of a landslide-prone slope. The excessive rains likewise triggered the landslide in this area. According to local residents, Brgy. Punta already experienced a landslide event in 1978.

Brgy. Pinut-an, San Ricardo

Brgy. Pinut-an in San Ricardo is situated at the southeastern shores of the island. It lies in a very narrow strip of land bounded by very steep mountains of intensely fractured rocks to the west, and the ocean immediately to the east, making the area naturally prone to disaster. The rampaging water that carried the rocks, soil, mud and vegetative debris along Pinut-an creek was triggered by the sudden release of said materials accumulated upstream earlier in the day. Rough seas prevented any evacuation attempts from succeeding.

Surigao and Agusan River Valley

In the Surigao area, major landslides occurred in Brgys. Rizal, Malimono, and a 20-m stretch of road between Hinatuan and Bislig. Reports indicate 14 fatalities in Brgy. Rizal when two houses were covered with loose rocks and gravels.

The Agusan River Valley, stretching all the way to Davao, Butuan and Surigao, was inundated by heavy floods. The situation was mainly due to the fact that the river systems are generally silted, the adjoining watersheds already devoid of forest cover, and rainfall was really unprecedented.

Concerted Effort Saves the Day for Diwalwal

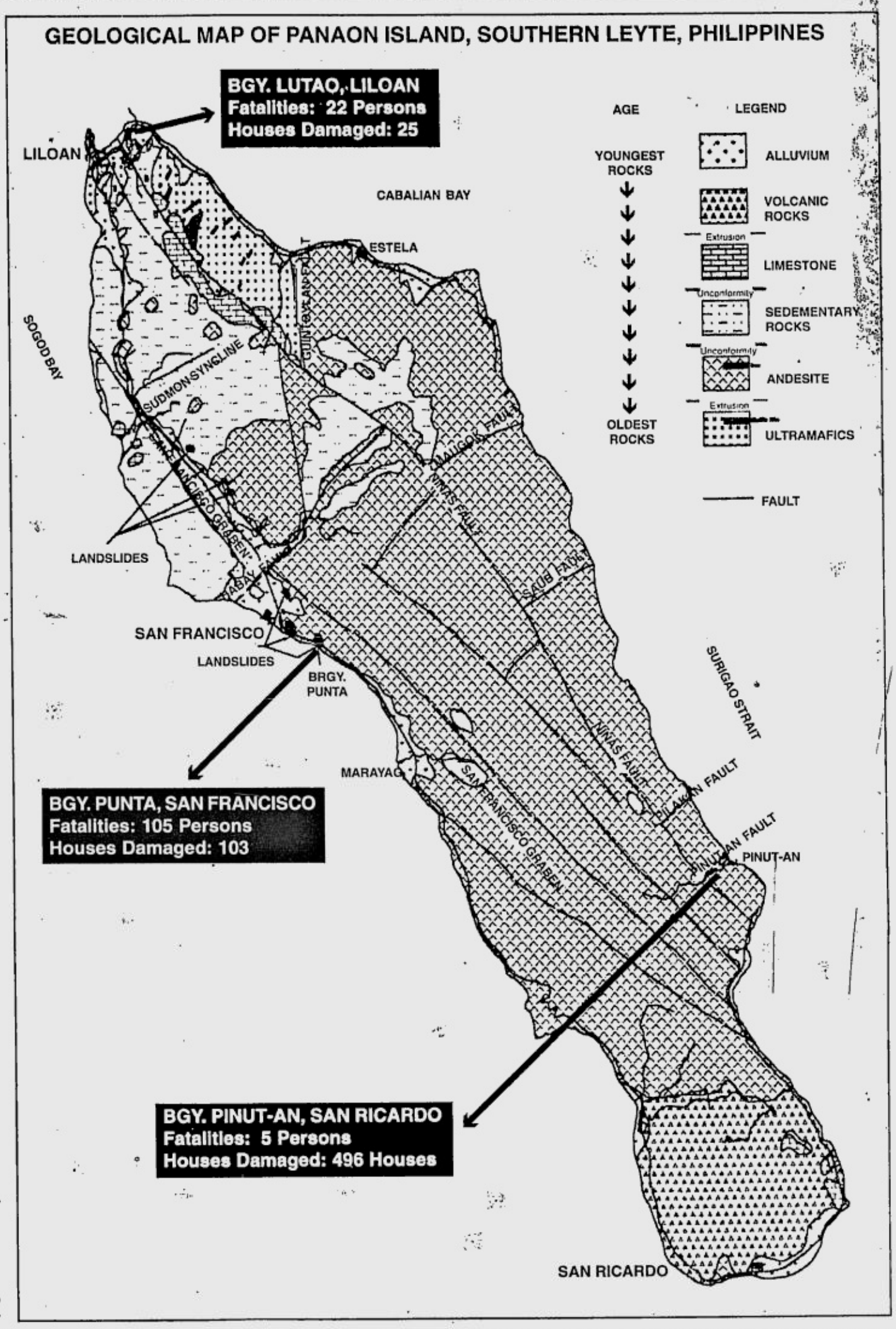
Compared to other years, accidents in the Diwalwal gold rush area was noticeably minimal this year with only one reported fatality. This is due to the concerted efforts of the DENR, LGUs and other government agencies which conducted the geohazard mapping, intense information drive, posting of notices in identified danger zones, and the preparation of various safe evacuation sites.

Current Response

Immediately after the tragedies were reported, and as soon as the access and weather permitted, DENR-MGB coordinated with the concerned LGUs to provide all possible assistance the office can provide to the affected communities.

In Panaon, geologists and safety engineers were deployed to provide technical assistance in identifying still potentially hazardous areas, and at the same time, locate safer grounds for evacuation/relocation. Mining companies from various parts of the country had also been mobilized to provide possible manpower and equipment assistance; medical teams; water and food supplies.

In the Surigao area, the DENR-MGB regional office coordinated closely with the Surigao City government and other LGUs to provide technical assistance in the rescue and relief efforts. Relocation and resettlement sites of safer grounds are also being identified for the LGU's guidance.



The Way Forward

Clearly, disaster preparedness measures must be sharpened and an early warning system established in order to prevent other tragedies similar to Panaon Island and Surigao from happening again. Towards this end, the DENR working with the DOST-PAG-ASA, PHIVOCS and the Office of Civil Defense has developed the following Action Plan:

1. Immediately assess Bicol, Eastern Visayas and North-eastern Mindanao (the areas where heavy rainfall is expected in the 1st quarter of 2004) by integrating various thematic maps to identify high risk areas for rain-induced landslides and flash floods.
2. Formulate a local-based early warning system.
3. Inform and train the LGUs concerned and the local communities in these high risk areas and together, develop and implement both the short-term and the long-term disaster prevention plan.
4. By March, start the same geohazard assessment and planning for the western section of the country which is expected to receive heavy rains by May onwards.
5. Continuously monitor active landslides.
6. At the same time, start the massive reforestration of the affected areas by providing appropriate seedlings, by tapping the LGUs, local community members as well as the schools and the military and by holding consultations with the concerned private landowners to convince them to participate and with the LGUs for them to provide incentives.

*Interested parties may contact the nearest **DENR office**, or reach the **DENR Central Office** thru the following:*

Tel. No. : **02-928-0691**
Fax No. : **02-920-4352**
Text : **2920**
e-mail : ***web@denr.gov.ph***

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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METRO
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JAN. 30 EXECUTION

Woman pleads for son on death row

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

ALL SHE wants is to take her son back to their hometown in Negros Occidental.

And if this will be the only way to save her son from his scheduled execution, then Benilda Lara, 62, is ready to kneel down and beg for President Macapagal-Arroyo's mercy.

Benilda's son, convicted kidnapper Roberto Lara, 33, has a date with the executioner on Jan. 30.

Lara is the first in line after Ms Macapagal decided to lift the moratorium on the death penalty.

But during an interview at the National Bilibid Prisons Church yesterday noon, the grieving mother said her son was innocent.

"(Ms Macapagal) is also a mother," the mother, speaking in Ilonggo, told the INQUIRER yesterday. "A mother could never accept that her son would be killed for something he did not do."

Benilda, one of her daughters and Roberto's two children, arrived at the National Bilibid Prisons yesterday morning after NBP chaplain Fr. Robert Olaguer fetched them in Talisay, Negros Occidental.

The mother immediately went to see her son and vowed to do everything she can to save him.

"If the President wants, I can just take the place of my son," Benilda said in between sobs. "I am old now. But my son is still young. He has a lot ahead of him. His two children are very young, too."

Roberto's children, aged 6 and 8, continued to play as their grandmother cried, apparently still unaware of their father's plight.

The girl, 6, told the INQUIRER that she just wanted her father to be released from prison so they could all go home together. She was only 1 when her father went to jail.

Roberto and his co-accused were convicted by the Marikina Regional Trial Court on Sept. 9, 1999 for the kidnapping of Chinese businessman Joseph Tomas Co and his assistant on Aug. 10, 1998.

The Supreme Court affirmed the death sentence on Aug. 15, 2001. When Ms Macapagal lifted the moratorium on the death penalty for convicted kidnappers, Roberto was listed the first in line.

Benilda had long wanted to see her son after she heard about the news of his execution on Jan. 1.

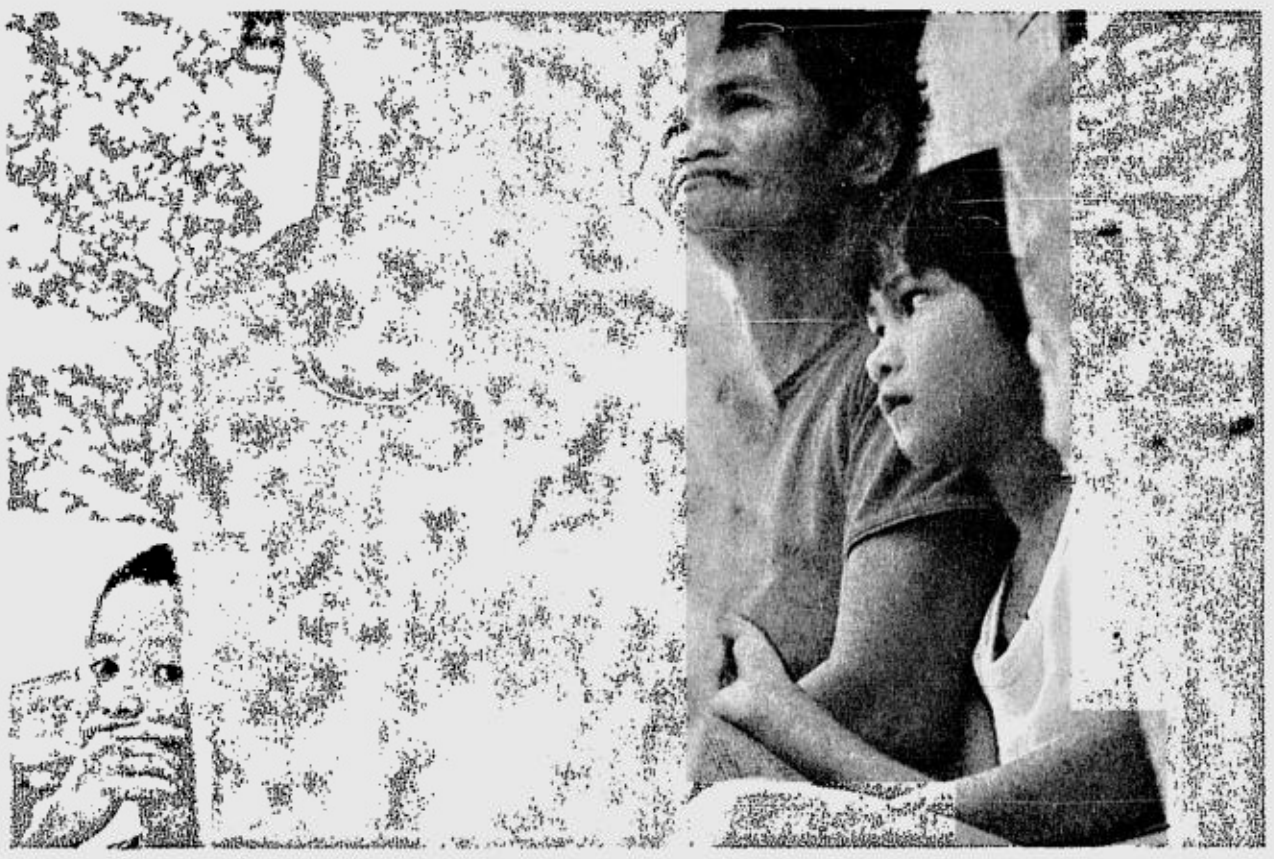
"But we have no money to spend for our fares," she had said.

On Jan. 8, Olaguer went to Talisay and delivered a letter from Roberto. He also brought with him the arrest warrant for Roberto's uncle, Pedrito Mabansag, who was arrested by the Region VI Mobile Group the following day.

Olaguer told the INQUIRER that Roberto had long been saying he was innocent and that his uncle was the mastermind. Olaguer then went to Marikina City to verify if a warrant had been issued against Mabansag.

He found that there was.

Mabansag, tagged as the mastermind, later cleared Roberto of participation in the kidnapping.



BENILDA Lara with Roberto's two children, John Paul (left) and Emy Rose, sit on the steps leading to the Bilibid Prisons chapel.

"LET ME exchange places with my son," Benilda Lara says as she weeps for her son, Roberto, who is is set to be executed on Jan. 30. EDWIN BACASMAS

Dusted and ready, death chamber waits for convicts

THE LETHAL injection chamber has been repainted. Parts of it have been repaired. Everyone is ready for the Jan. 30 execution—everyone but the families of the two convicts who would be the first to go.

The other afternoon, officials of the National Bilibid Prisons conducted a "dry-run" of the execution.

NBP Director Dionisio Santiago told the INQUIRER yesterday that all the procedures had been checked through.

Convicted kidnappers Roberto Lara and Roderick Licayan are scheduled to be executed on Jan. 30, after President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the moratorium on the death penalty.

Ms Macapagal made the move to address the spate of kidnappings in the country during the last quarter of 2003.

Yesterday, Lara's mother flew from Negros Occidental to Metro Manila. The mother wants to ask Ms Macapagal to spare the life of her son, who she claims is innocent.

But should the government decide to proceed with the executions, Santiago said the lethal injection chamber is ready.

He added that all the personnel involved in the execution had been briefed.

The isolation room, where the convicts scheduled for execution would be housed for 15 days before their execution, has also been cleaned.

The isolation room used to be a barracks until it was renovated and cleaned in time for Friday's dry-run, Santiago said in another interview over radio station dzBB. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

From a dungeon to a place of honor

By Tarra Quismundo

THE DUNGEONS of Fort Santiago, a place where chill was felt and moans were once heard, could soon be seen by eyes other than those whose lives were claimed inside it.

"We would like to recreate the place as one of honor and sacrifice, not of torture," said Department of Tourism Sec. Richard Gordon, who went down the dungeons last December and came through the narrow centuries-old concrete passages.

Found beneath the Baluarte de Santa Barbara, a structure facing the Pasig River, the dungeons of Fort Santiago served as underground prison cells, where captured American and Filipino soldiers were held during the World War II.

Gordon related that the dungeons, located below sea level, was originally built as a food storage area for the Spaniards, since the air was cooler underground.

In that same place, hundreds of soldiers were later killed, either by bullets or by the water that rushed through the dungeon's air vent when the tide rose high.

And their experiences of torture, pain and confinement, may soon come alive again as mannequins—representing American, Filipino and Japanese soldiers—are put up inside the dungeon.

"These would show how they were tortured and interrogated," said Gordon, gesturing how one mannequin would be chained to a wall.

To complete the mood underneath, the sight of tormented soldiers, and the feel of the cool air at the dungeon, would be complemented by the sound of groans that would echo through the walls.

Visitors will soon be able to go down the dungeons and see, feel and hear for themselves how it is like underground.

Gordon said that the dungeons, above which is the two-story Baluarte de Santa Barbara, are safe, and that there is no danger of the structure caving in.

TOURISM Secretary Richard Gordon gets to admire the view from the ramparts of Fort Santiago. ERIK ARAZAS

IN THE dungeons deep beneath the fortress, men were once tortured and viciously slain. ERIK ARAZAS

Police hunt down 2 cops for killing Atienza aide

By Leila Salaverria and Luige del Puerto

WESTERN Police District lawmen are hunting down two more suspects in the killing of a political aide of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

The two suspects—a Makati policeman and a former member of the Philippine National Police—allegedly shot and killed Noel Vivas, 40, during a brawl that took place after a billiards game in Sta. Ana, Manila on Dec. 30.

A 17-year-old girl who just happened to be passing by was also killed by a stray billet.

Two other men identified as Anicito Polon and Ronald Yabut were also wounded in the incident.

WPD homicide unit head Senior Insp. Alejandro Yanquiling Jr. identified the two suspects as Roy Hernandez, a former member of the national police, and a certain Abet, believed to be a member of the Makati Police.

Witnesses told investigators that the two suspects casually walked away from the crime scene right after the shooting.

The suspects even asked some bystanders if they knew who they were.

Earlier, WPD lawmen arrested Isaac Baltazar and Pancho Nagbuya and accused them of killing Vivas.

Witnesses told police that Baltazar and Nagbuya were involved in the brawl but were not the ones who had shot Vivas.

The fight allegedly took place after a billiards game where the victim and the suspects had placed bets. After the bets had been paid, Vivas and one of the suspects had a verbal tussle that led to a full-blown fight.

In Pasig City, a policeman was arrested for poking a gun at a driver right inside the victim's own house on Friday night.

PO1 Jose Dexter Esquilona, a member of the Special Action Force based in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig, is facing charges of grave threat and violation of the election gun ban.

Investigation revealed that Esquilona entered the house of driver Ramilo Gatpayat, 43, at 9:15 p.m. Friday, without the owner's consent.

Esquilona was drunk at the time, police said.

Gatpayat confronted the suspect inside his house on Bunyi Street, Barangay Buting.

The police said Esquilona then took out a .45-caliber pistol and pointed it at the face of the driver.

A member of the household saw what was going on and called the police.

From behind bars, Esquilona denied he pointed the gun at the driver, although he admitted that he was drunk at the time.

Suspect in the shooting of police informer dies in Manila hospital

THE SUSPECTED drug pusher who allegedly engaged Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency operatives in a shootout on Friday died at the Metropolitan Hospital in Manila.

Eric Dino, 38, was pronounced dead at the Metropolitan Hospital in Manila at 6:40 p.m. on Friday, according to Dr. Allan Chua of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit.

Dino had two gunshot wounds in the face. He was wounded in the reported shootout with agents of PDEA Task Force Hunter, under Reynaldo Jaylo.

Also killed in the shootout was a PDEA police informer, Richard Elnar, and Dino's accomplice, Enrique Esguerra.

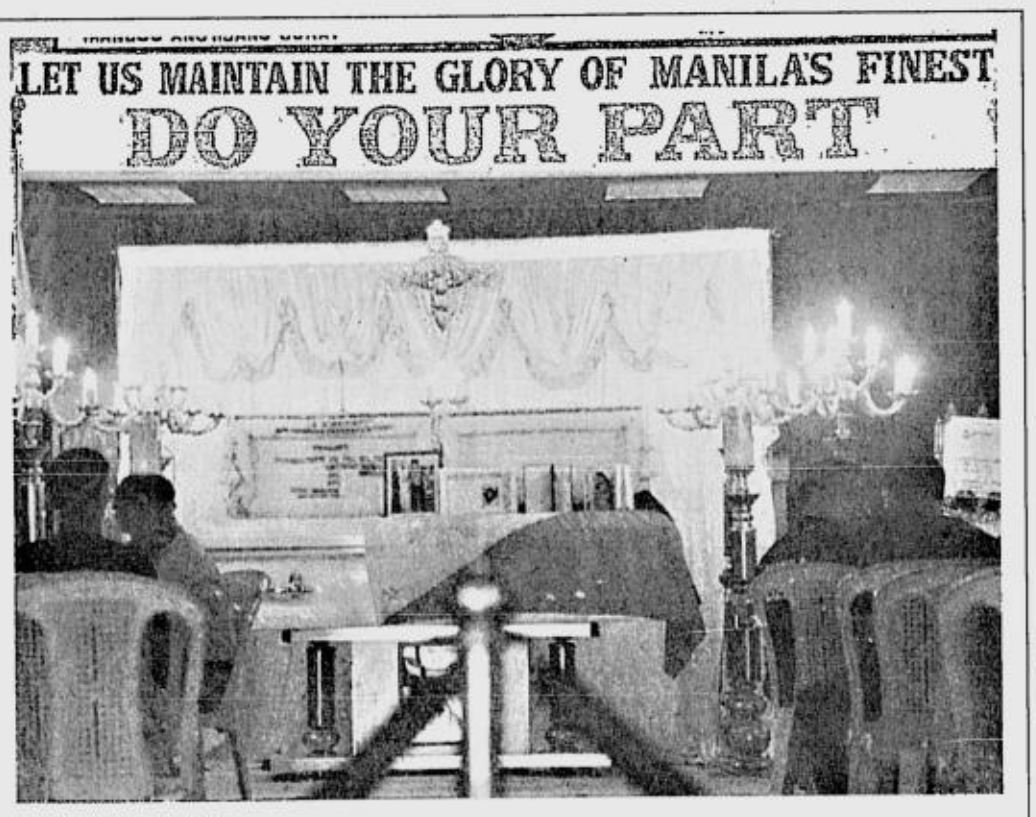
The incident took place early Friday morning on a bridge along Padilla Street near the Binondo Suite Hotel in Binondo, Manila.

Jaylo said in a TV interview that Elnar was probably killed after Dino and Esguerra discovered that Elnar only had strips of paper—instead of hard cash—to pay for the 50 grams of shabu he had ordered from the suspected pushers.

The strips of paper were wrapped in a P500-bill, Jaylo said.

The pay-off was taking place inside the suspects' green SUV when the PDEA agents covering Elnar heard a gunshot. Immediately, the PDEA agents began firing in the suspects' direction.

After the volley of gunfire was over, Elnar and the two drug suspects were rushed to the Metropolitan Hospital. Both Elnar and Esguerra were declared dead on arrival. *Leila Salaverria*



A HERO'S WAKE
Here lies PO3 Nelson Gonzales, whose service firearm failed to discharge when he was attacked on Dec. 31. Some policemen are claiming that Gonzales' firearm failed to fire because it was sealed with tape—a measure police officials took to ensure that no lawman would fire his gun during the holidays. Above, colleagues and friends pay their respects to Gonzales' family at the Western Police District headquarters on United Nations Ave. in Manila. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Warehouse, residence razed in Manila fires

By Leila Salaverria

TWO FIRES on Friday broke out in Manila and destroyed over P750,000 worth of property, including a warehouse owned by the Manila City government.

The first fire razed a two-story residence on P. Guevarra Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The house belonged to a Ricky Prospero, arson investigators said.

FO1 Jun Pangan showed that the blaze began on the second floor of the house at 6:51 p.m.

The fire reached the fifth alarm before it was put out at 7:31 p.m.

Nobody was reported injured in the fire.

Fire officials pegged property damage at P700,000.

At 11:14 p.m., a second fire struck a warehouse owned by the city government.

The blaze began at the rear portion of the warehouse located within the Manila City engineering compound on Reina Regente Street in Binondo, Manila, fire officials said.

The fire, which reached the fourth alarm, was put out at 11:29 p.m.

Arson investigators said the fire quickly consumed the structure, which was made of old, combustible materials.

Damage was estimated at P50,000.

No other structures were affected by the fire.

Authorities also said that no one was hurt in the incident.

Robbery suspects dragged in chains

By Luige del Puerto

MEMBERS of the Office of Public Safety and Security in Marikina City yesterday might have unwittingly violated the rights of two accused robbers when they used thick chains to lash the suspects before dragging them to the police station.

An OPSS member said they had to use the chains—normally found in trucks that haul off vehicles—because their office had not been issued handcuffs.

A pair of handcuffs costs around P500.

Richmond Cainglit, 24, and Richard Geralin, 22, were taken to the police station with thick heavy chains tied around their waists.

"We didn't have a choice," the OPSS member explained.

Investigation showed that Cainglit and Geralin took the cellular phone of Michael Co, 17, of Barangay Sto. Nino, just as he was alighting from a jeepney on Guerilla Street around 10 a.m.

The suspects were armed with a fan knife and a 12.5-inch bolo made in Mindanao, police said.

Unfortunately for the suspects, Gerry Sarmiento, one of the jeepney passengers, had gone out of his way to follow them.

Sarmiento reported the incident to traffic enforcers Niel Aldrin Samson and Larry Buensuceno. The three men caught up with the suspects on Sumulong Highway.

OPSS members later arrived and took the suspects to the station.

Young cops say PNP lacks good leaders

By Luige del Puerto

JUNIOR police officers recently criticized the Philippine National Police for its perceived "lack of good governance," during a workshop in Tagaytay, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

The young police officers said this issue has spawned other problems within the police organization, chief among them is the lack of funding and the politicization of the police force.

"There was a free discussion," according to one junior officer who requested anonymity. "Among the things that came out was that the junior officers are frustrated over the lack of good governance in the PNP."

"The young officers believe that if the issue of leadership is fixed, the problems of the police organization would be greatly lessened," the officer said.

He added that his colleagues, who "bared all their problems" during the workshop, recognize that the current PNP leaders are weak and susceptible to the machinations of politicians.

He said the junior officers also want R.A. 8551, the law which provides for the reform and reorganization of PNP, amended.

The officers said the law gives too much room for politicians to intervene in the handing of assignments and promotions of policemen.

The United Nations Development Program and the Supreme Court sponsored the seminar, which was aimed at gathering police officers' opinions on how to make the PNP a "more capable, effective and credible" organization.

The seminar's results would later be presented to the PNP Reform Commission.

The officer said ranking police officials were purposely left out so that the junior officers would be more at ease in speaking their minds.

"We hope steps will be taken soon," the young officer said. "The junior officers only have the good of the PNP in mind."

Erratum

IN THE STORY "Andreas needs liver transplant," which appeared in the Inquirer's Metro section on Jan. 8, the Sumagpao family's contact number was mistakenly listed as (632) 770-1643.

The correct number is (632) 770-1634.

Those who would like to help Andreas Manuel C. Sumagpao, the 10-month-old baby who is in need of a liver transplant, may reach the boy's parents at cellular phone (0917) 630-5934.

The Sumagpao residence is located at 69 Crispin Street Extension, Rizal Village, Alabang, Muntinlupa.

ANGELICA

Girl has rare liver disease

YEAR-OLD Angelica Mijares once again is knocking on the doors of kind-hearted readers for help.

She was born with biliary atresia, a rare liver disease characterized by the absence of bile ducts.

The bile would then build up in the liver, ultimately destroying the organ.

Angelica needs a liver transplant, and soon.

Her mother, Melanie, told the INQUIRER that they have already raised P1.3 million from kind donors. But she also said that the amount is still not enough for the transplant, which costs P3 million.

Melanie and her husband, Ronmel, may be reached at Phase IV-A, Blk 2 Lot 19, Pacita Complex, San Pedro, Laguna; telephone number 808-1358; cell phone numbers (0919) 844-2618 and (0927) 259-3204. Donations may be coursed through the account of Melanie Mijares; ITF: Angelica Allaine Mijares, account numbers: 1027-04725-1 RCBC Savings Bank; 6393-3550-83 BPI Family Bank.

Donors may also get in touch with LIFT-B.A.B.I.E.S. Foundation Inc. at (632) 824-4621 and cell phone (0918) 926-3237.

Additional excavations delay Makati roadwork

By Margaux Ortiz

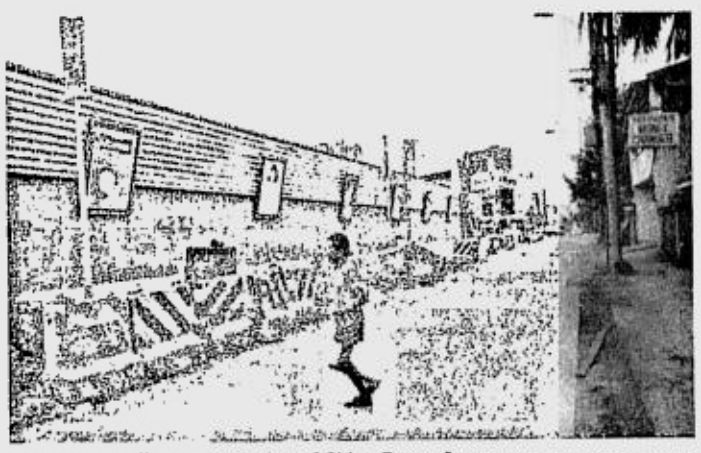
THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority should not be the only agency blamed for the delay in the Chino Roces (formerly Pasong Tamo) road project.

At about the same time the MMDA started with its road project in Makati's Chino Roces Ave. in June 2002, the Manila Water Company Inc. began installing a new kilometer-long water line on the same stretch, according to Antonio Amiscaray, Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project (MMURTRIP) director.

Amiscaray said the 19-month-old MMDA road project, which is already 70 percent finished, is expected to be completed on March 7 or earlier.

"MWCI is responsible for many of the new diggings on the avenue," Amiscaray told the INQUIRER in an interview.

In installing the new water lines, MWCI workmen had to make excavations about half-a-meter from the curb, he said.



EERIE in its stillness—a portion of Chino Roces Ave. PHOTOS BY RANDY HORMILLOSA

Amiscaray added that the MWCI project is 65 percent finished.

"We are trying our best to hasten the road project's completion," Amiscaray said, stressing that they are already done with the major portions of the avenue, including the road pavement, pedestrian walkways and street lighting.

The MMDA official said that the agency's project scope includes the replacement of the drainage system and concrete pavement, the widening of pedestrian sidewalks, installation of street lighting, pedestrian barriers and road/lane markings, traffic signalization, and landscaping.

He said that aside from the MWCI activity, unforeseen problems with utility lines due to incomplete diagrams submitted by utility companies caused the project's delay.

Amiscaray added that they also had to deal with stakeholders who dilly-dallied on demolishing their properties which encroached on the pavement.

He also said the MMDA had earlier problems with the bad weather and traffic management.

"We just could not close the area to vehicles anytime (for we would be causing massive) traffic jams," Amiscaray said.

FOR 19 months, work on this vital stretch has dragged on at a snail's pace.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, January 11, 2004
BAPTISM OF THE LORD

1st Reading: **Is 40:1-5, 9-11**

Be comforted, my people,
be strengthened, says your God.
Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, proclaim to her
that her time of bondage is at an end,
that her guilt has been paid for,
that from the hand of Yahweh
she has received double punishment
for all her iniquity.
A voice cries,
"In the wilderness prepare the way for Yahweh.
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley will be raised up;
every mountain and hill will be laid low.
The stumbling blocks shall become level
and the rugged places smooth.
The glory of Yahweh will be revealed,
and all mortals together will see it;
for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken."
A voice says, "Cry."
and I say, "What shall I cry?"
"All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty as the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower wilts;
when the breath of Yahweh blows upon it.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will forever stand."
Go up onto the high mountain, messenger of Zion,
lift up your voice with strength,
fear not to cry aloud when you tell Jerusalem
and announce to the cities of Judah:
Here is your God!
Here comes your God with might;
his strong arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and here before him is his booty.
Like a shepherd he tends his flock:
he gathers the lambs in his arms,
he carries them in his bosom,
gently leading those that are with young.

2nd Reading: **Tit 2:11-14; 3:4-7**

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, teaching us to reject an irreligious way of life and worldly greed, and to live in this world as responsible persons, upright and serving God, while we await our blessed hope—the glorious manifestation of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus. He gave himself for us, to redeem us from every evil and to purify a people he wanted to be his own and dedicated to what is good.

But God our Savior revealed his eminent goodness and love for humankind and saved us, not because of good deeds we may have done but for the sake of his own mercy, to the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit poured over us through Christ Jesus our Savior, so that having been justified by his grace we should become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Gospel: **Lk 3:15-16, 21-22**

The people were wondering about John's identity, "Could he be the Messiah?" Then John answered them, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will do much more: he will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire. As for me, I am not worthy to untie his sandal."

Now, with all the people who came to be baptized, Jesus too was baptized. Then, while he was praying, the heavens opened: the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the bodily form of a dove and a voice from heaven was heard, "You are my Son, this day I have begotten you."

Commentary

How do you recognize John the Baptist in Christian art? He's the scruffy one—even though it's a scruffiness made genteel by generations of artists. He came from the desert, where "he wore a garment made of camel-hair and his food was locusts and wild honey" (Mt 3:4). His message was equally rough: he didn't begin, "My dear brothers and sisters"; he began, "Brood of vipers!" (Lk 3:7). Could he be the Messiah, the Promised One? Many thought he might be. This shows that they had no glamorized image of the Messiah. They expected a thrashing! God would burn up most of them up like chaff, John promised. This was a significant phrase: the Pharisees regarded the common people as chaff-empty husks. John's words must have cut them to the bone.

John's cousin too came from the desert, but his attitude was so different. Looking at the crowd "he felt sorry for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the laborers are few'" (Mt 9:36). He does not see them as chaff, but as harvest-ripe and full of life. It is because he believes in us that we are able to believe in him.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW/REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—Buy-bust operation—In fine, a buy-bust operation is a form of entrapment that is resorted to for trapping and capturing felons in the execution of their criminal plan. The operation is sanctioned by law and has consistently proved to be an effective method of apprehending drug peddlers. Unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the members of the buy-bust team were inspired by any improper motive or were not properly performing their duty, their testimonies with respect to the operation deserve full faith and credit. Without proof of motive to falsely impute such a serious crime against appellant, the presumption of regularity in the performance of official duty and the findings of the trial court on the credibility of witnesses shall prevail. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, People vs Lee, G. R. No. 145337, October 2, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

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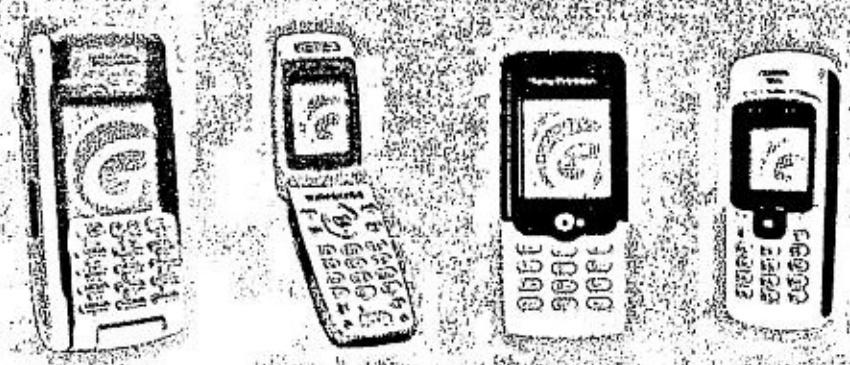

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@Flex 2,500	P 2,500	350	P 4.50	P 5.50
@Flex 3,500	P 3,500	400	P 4.00	P 4.50
@Flex 5,000	P 5,000	400	P 4.00	P 4.50

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL—Titans vs Patriots; 2:30 p.m.; Colts vs Chiefs; tomorrow at 2 a.m.; ESPN—Tennessee battles New England for a seat in the AFC finals while Indianapolis and Kansas City dispute the other slot.

BASKETBALL: NBA-Hornets vs Bulls; 9:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—New Orleans coach Tim Floyd faces his former team in Chicago.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

PSA AWARDS NIGHT
Athletes of the year Manny Pacquiao (left) and CJ Suarez display their trophies during the PSA Annual Awards Friday night at the Manila Pavilion.
ROMY HOMILLADA

Gamboa challenges WBC jr flyweight champ today

By Rey Danseco, *Contributor*

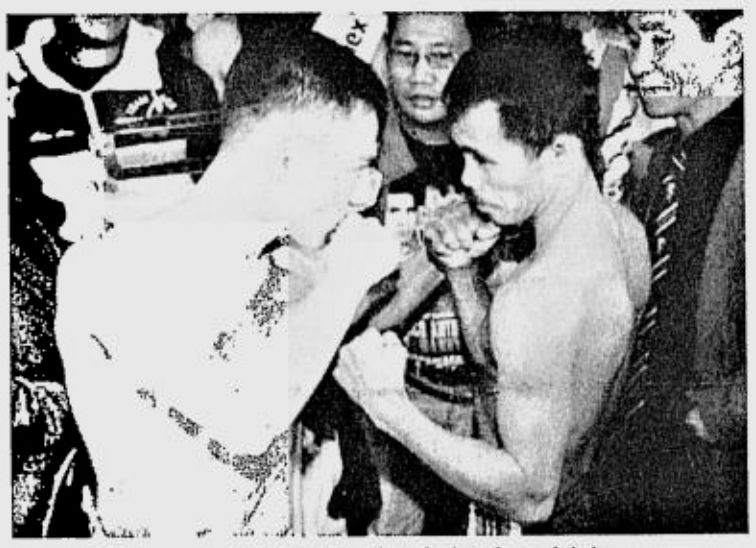
VETERAN Joma Gamboa challenges reigning World Boxing Council (WBC) junior flyweight champion Jorge "Travieso" Arce today at the 8,000-seat Centro de Exposiciones Banamex in Mexico City, Mexico.

Gamboa, who is seeking a second world title, weighed 108 lbs, a pound heavier than Arce during the weigh-in supervised by American Hector Garcia Friday.

The Bacolod City puncher will climb the ring the underdog in the scheduled 12-round fight despite his experience.

However, trainer Juanito Ablaca, who lost his wristwatch in their hotel room, said he has designed a fight plan he hoped would surprise Arce.

Ablaca will be joined in the corner by Gamboa's Japanese manager, Joe Koizumi, who arrived here after missing his flight that later crashed last Wednesday in Hawaii.



ARCE (left) and Gamboa face each other during the weigh-in. AP

Gamboa (33-7-2, 22 KOs) reigned as the World Boxing Association (WBA) minimumweight champion until December 2000 when he bowed to Japanese Keitaro Hoshino by decision in Yokohama, Japan.

Arce, who counts three Filipinos among his victims in 38 fights, will put his belt on the line for the fourth time since he wrested the world title from Yosam Choi of Korea via a sixth round stoppage at Olympic Park Fencing Stadium in Seoul, Korea, last July 2002.

The 5-foot-6 Mexican improved his record to 34 wins with 25 knockouts against three losses and a draw after he kept his belt last May 5 by posting a controversial 6th round technical decision over compatriot Melchor Cob Castro.

His Filipino victims are Juanito Rubillar in October 2001, Carmelo Caceres in December 2000 and Jovas Presbitero in October 2000.

Arce decisioned Rubillar, currently No. 1 ranked contender, for the WBC junior fly interim title. He prevailed over Caceres in a non-title fight and defended his WBC junior flyweight youth title over Presbitero with second-round TKO wins.

Veteran American referee Jay Nady, who worked Luisito Espinosa's successful WBC featherweight title defense against Carlos Rios in Kidapawan City, will be the third man in the ring.

The judges are Peter Trematerra of Florida, Ray Hawkins of Texas and Gerald Ritter of Oklahoma.

ROOKIE CAMP

PBA hopefuls display wares

By June Navarro

ALVAREZ

THE SEARCH for the Philippine Basketball Association's brightest rookie prospects begins today when 49 aspirants showcase their talent and skill in the second PBA rookie camp at the Quezon City Memorial Circle.

Although top collegiate stars and national team players are hot on the pick list, lesser-known rookie hopefuls could alter the trend of selecting the big amateur stars first with an impressive display.

Shell, armed with the top overall pick, will be in the forefront of teams seeking to find out the strength and weaknesses of each prospect.

Vying for the No. 1 slot are Ervin Sotto, Ranidel de Ocampo, Marc Pingris and Fil-Australian Joachim Gunter Thoss.

Shell team manager Bobby Kanapi said that should there be no available bigman with the potential and caliber of Talk 'N Text center Asi Taulava on the trading block, the Turbochargers would proceed to snag the most bankable slotman in the draft.

Other big names in the rookie camp, which will be supervised by the multi-titled coach Norman Black, are national team mainstays James Yap, Rich Alvarez, Gary David and Wesley Gonzales.

Fil-Australian Richard Benitez Michael and Fil-American Denver Lopez are also prime prospects in the draft set Jan. 16 at the Glorietta Activity Center.

The 6-foot-1 Lopez had reportedly displayed his playmaking skills in one of Red Bull Barako's practice sessions while Purefoods is also curious on what the California State University-Fullerton alum could offer.

Michael, on the other hand, is reportedly a flashy 6-1 point guard at the University of Sydney in Australia.

The camp starts at 3 p.m.

Meanwhile, talks of a trade involving John Arigo spread like wildfire after the 6-foot-3 swingman initially turned down a lucrative offer by the Alaska Aces Friday afternoon, a source yesterday told the INQUIRER.

Arigo, drafted sixth overall by the Aces in 2001, was said to have declined Alaska's three-year, P12.6-million contract proposal.

Fash gets last semifinal slot

GAMES TUESDAY (*Pasig Sports Center*)
1:30 p.m.—Welcoat vs Blu Star
3:30 p.m.—Sunkist-UST vs Fash

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DRAWING firepower in the clutch from pro league hopefuls, Fash Liquid Detergent finally nailed the last PBL Platinum Cup semifinal slot with a 61-56 victory over Viva Mineral Water-FEU yesterday at the Pasig Sports Center.

The Liquid Power unveiled a surprise package in Niño Gelig, who exploded for 20 points, including clutch hits in the last few minutes of the game.

PBA free agents Allan Salangsang and Peter June Simon backed up Gelig's effort by sinking crucial free throws that ensured Fash's seventh win in 12 games.

In the second game, Welcoat Paints unleashed the full might of its firepower to pulverize Montaña, 90-64, and finish the eliminations with the league-best card of 9-3. The Jewels bowed out with a 5-7 record.

The semis starts Tuesday with Welcoat, Blu Star, Sunkist and Fash carrying their elimination records in a double-round robin affair.

"I hope that we'll play better in the semis," said Fash coach Junel Baculi.

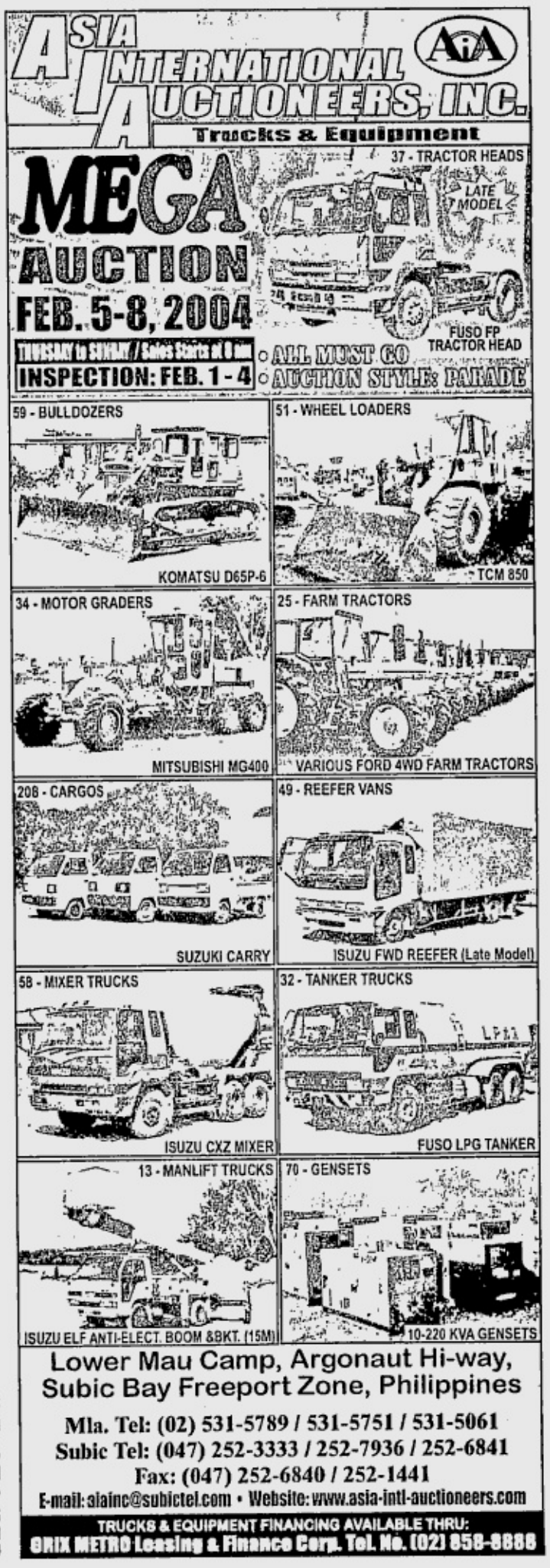
"We are still struggling, but as long as we are winning, I can't complain," he added of his players, most of whom are eyeing stints in the pro league this season.

Rich Alvarez, a probable top draft pick, made up for his absence last Thursday against ICTSI-La Salle by canning six points, nine rebounds, two assists and two blocks. "At least Rich is back rebounding for us," said Baculi.

But Fash will need more from him if it wants to duplicate its win last year in the Unity Cup over Viva.

The Water Force, eliminated and all, simply refused to roll over and die and kept coming

FASH/ A22



ASIAN QUALIFYING

China boxers out to stamp class

By Roy Luarca

WATCH out for China in the 22nd Asian Olympic Boxing qualifying. The sports superpower wants to extend its dominance into the ring.

Bidding to upstage the region's traditional boxing powers, China is competing in all the 11 weight divisions included in the weeklong event slated at the Puerto Princesa City Coliseum in Palawan.

"Make no mistake about it, the Chinese team is going to give the favorites a lot of headaches. China has improved a lot," said Manny Lopez, president of the organizing Amateur Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Fact is, the Chinese and the world class Kazakhs are already deep in training in Puerto Princesa, the province's clean and green capital city.

Leading China's assault is light-flyweight Zou Shiming, who stunned the boxing world when he salvaged the bronze medal in last year's World Championships in Bangkok in his very first international stint.

Others in the team are flyweight Liu . Shih-Jung, bantamweight Yseng Tzu Chiang, featherweight Chung Chun Un, lightweight Hsieh Huang Chen, light welterweight Chang Hsiao-Chih, welterweight Liu Tai Chin, middleweight Liu Yen Chun, heavyweight Liu Chia Fu, and super heavyweight Liao Sheng Hao.

Other early comers are Qatar, Uzbekistan, North and South Korea, Japan, Tajikistan, India, Chinese-Taipei, Thailand and, of course, the Philippines.

The Filipinos are hoping to exact revenge over the Thais, who denied them five gold medals in the 22nd Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

The drawing of lots will be held today as Lopez declared that everything is in readiness for the event officially starting tomorrow.

Lopez said he is still waiting for the arrival of Afghanistan and Iran, two teams which have confirmed their participation.

A total of 24 slots for the Athens Olympics are up for grabs in the qualifying. Pakistan and China will also host Asian qualifiers later this year. A total of 62 boxers will represent Asia in the Athens Olympics.

Uzbekistan, which won an Olympic gold in Sydney, is composed of Mamajonov Otabek, Doniyorov Tulashboy, Sooltonov Bahodirjon, Khidirov Beksov, Mahmudov Dilshod, Sarsebaev Bahit, Husanov Sherzod, Haydarov Utkirbek, Gulomov Nodir, Sergey Mihamilov, Rustam Saidov.

Utkirbek, a middleweight, triumphed in the 2002 World Championships last year, while Mihayilov, a heavyweight, and super heavyweight Saidov copped the bronze medals in the Sydney Olympics.

Bata-Alex showdown in pro tour

FILIPINO Efren "Bata" Reyes posted an 11-5 victory over 2003 US Open champion Jeremy Jones and arranged a showdown with Fil-Canadian Alex Pagulayan in the 2nd Annual US Professional Pool Players Association Pro Tour Championships yesterday at the Bicycle Casino in Los Angeles, California.

Pagulayan disposed of Arturo Rivera, 11-9, in the second round of the $40,000 event and also stayed in the winner side bracket with Reyes.

The last time Reyes and Pagulayan met was in the championship round of the 2003 Tokyo 9-ball tour won by Pagulayan.

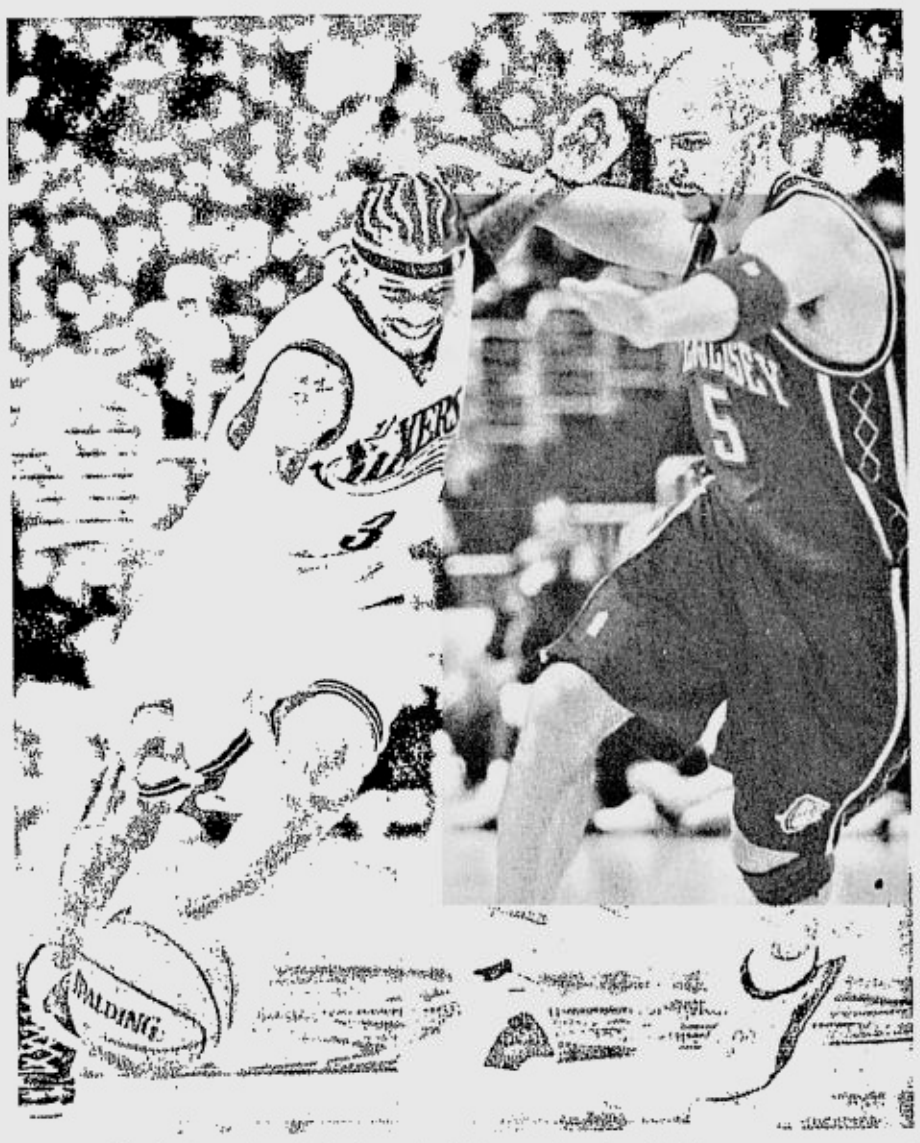
Two California-based Filipinos—Santos Sambajon and Jose "Amang" Parica—are also in the winner-side bracket. Parica is playing Jay Brumstetter at presstime while Sambajon defeated American Corey Harper.

Sambajon will next face Inside POOL Magazine 2003 player of the year Johnny Archer, 11-9 winner over Dan Wallace of San Diego, California.

Other victorious players include Germany's Ralf Souquet, Finland's Mika Immonen, Sweden's Marcus Chamat, Mexico's Ernesto Dominguez, and Americans Max Eberle and Rodney Morris.

Souquet trounced Scott Frost, 11-6; Immonen beat Buddy Hall, 11-7; Chamat nipped Lorry De Leon, Dominguez ousted Danny Hewitt, 11-5; Eberle crushed Johnny Kang, 11-4; and Morris whacked Paul Potier.

NM Marlon Bernardino, Contributor



IVERSON (left) tries to break free from the tight-guarding Jason Kidd. AP

Pacers extend win streak to 7 games

DALLAS—Ron Artest scored 26 points Friday to help the Indiana Pacers stretch their winning streak to seven games and improve the NBA's best record with a 92-80 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

Al Harrington and Jermaine O'Neal added 16 points each, and Jamaal Tinsley had 11 points and 12 assists for the Eastern Conference-leading Pacers (28-10).

Indiana's up tempo offense produced a 25-4 edge in fastbreak points. Dallas lost for only the third time at home.

"We were more aggressive offensively," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "You have to be when you play this team."

Dirk Nowitzki's 20 points led the Mavericks, but he had only five in the second half. Antawn Jamison had 19 points and Shawn Bradley added a season-high 12.

In New Orleans, Tim Duncan and Bruce Bowen each scored 15 points to lead seven San Antonio players in double figures as the Spurs defeated New Orleans, 94-84, for their 16th win in 17 games.

Turkey's Hedo Turkoglu scored 13, Tony Parker and Ron Mercer each scored 12, and Slovenia's Rasho Nesterovic and Devin Brown had 10 points each for the Spurs.

In Philadelphia, Glenn Robinson scored 24 of his season-high 26 points, leading Philadelphia over New Jersey, 97-81.

Robinson's best game of the season helped offset a poor first half by Allen Iverson, who was bothered by the flu.

Iverson, playing his third game since missing 10 straight with a bruised knee, came on late and finished with 17 points and 11 assists for his first double-double since Nov. 14.

In Orlando, Florida, Tracy McGrady scored 35 points as Orlando ended a six-game losing streak by holding on to beat Washington, 103-92.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 26 points to help the Los Angeles Lakers end a four-game losing streak and send Atlanta to its second-worst loss ever, 113-67.

Complete results:

Philadelphia 97, New Jersey 81; Orlando 103, Washington 92; LA Clippers 78, Toronto 68; Boston 107, Cleveland 82; San Antonio 94, New Orleans 84; Indiana 92, Dallas 80; Portland 87, Chicago 78; Milwaukee 103, Miami 94; Denver 106, Utah 96; Sacramento 113, Phoenix 93; LA Lakers 113, Atlanta 67; Seattle 122, Memphis 116

Bill Shaw Memorial golf slated Jan. 30-31

THE SCRAMBLE and aggregate modes of play will be used for the 15th edition of the Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Classic, the member-guest invitational tournament of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club presented by Samsung slated on Jan 30-31.

The scramble will be played at the west course while the aggregate will be used at the tougher east course in the two-day competition that is expected to make the battle for the overall title as well as division title, very exciting.

No less than P500,000 in raffle prizes on top of the hole-in-one bonanza of cars from Toyota Otis, Kart Plaza and GNC will be up for grabs in the event which also has the Bill Shaw Foundation, San Miguel Corp., the First Gentleman's Foundation, Korean Airlines and Unilever Philippines as major sponsors.

Premier sponsors are Pacific Paint & Oil Mfg. Inc., Sta. Elena Properties, Custom Clubmakers, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp. and Diageo Phils. Inc.

Hole sponsors include Atty. Gilberto "Bibit" Duavit, Pacsports Phils., Greenhills Shoppping Center, GG&A Clubshares, Pascual Laboratories, Gema Cocofoods Corp., Solar Entertainment, Alternative Beverage Co. Inc., Discovery Suites, Splash Corp., Mr. Jolly Ting, The South Spa, Nestle Phils., Synergy Med Center and Cathay Land.

There will be hole-in-one prizes on the eighth and 16th holes of the east and Nos. 3, 8, 11 and 14th of the west.

The organizing committee headed by sports and games chair Tonichi Tuason enjoins participating teams to attend the cocktails on Wednesday, Jan. 28 with special prizes to be raffled off.

Each registered team will be given P7,200 worth of gift certificates. They will be allowed free practice round on each of the courses from Jan. 21 to Jan. 28.

Huge field joining P4-M Rotary tilt

CLOSE to 400 players will be gunning for prizes totaling almost P4 million in the Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines (RGFFP) northern leg tournament on Jan. 15-17 at the Camp John Hay and Baguio Country Club courses in Baguio City.

The huge field will be made up of a merry mix of Rotarians from Metro Manila and other regional branches as well as several guests who are out to enjoy the perfect playing conditions at the two popular venues.

RGFFP officials headed by its chair Melito "Bimbo" Salazar, president/CEO Poch Borromeo and EVP/COO Albert Que all expressed confidence this year's tourney will be one of the most well-attended in its long history.

Now on its 18th year, the RGFFP has drawn the support of Fedex, Smart Communications, PLDT and Globe Asiatic Realty as major sponsors. Other backers are GNC, Sta. Lucia Realty, Cebu Pacific, Copacabana Hotel, Pilipinas Shell, Futura Window Covering, Primal Enterprises, Taylor Made and Enriquez Security Services Inc.

At stake are a St. Monique Duplex House in Binangonan, Rizal put up by Globe Asiatic Realty, a million pesos in cash, a brand new Toyota Altis, a Rolex watch and a Taylor Made golf set for those shooting aces on designated holes.

Each participant will have no less than 17 chances to win any of these hole-in-one prizes—11 at the par-3-laden BCC and six at Camp John Hay, making the possibility of someone hitting the jackpot very big.

Teams will be allowed to field in four players with the best three using the Molave scoring system counting for each round. They will dispute the team awards for the Founders, Governors, Presidents and Fellowship divisions.

Individual prizes in Flights A, B, C, D and E for 65 years and above will also be up for grabs while sponsors and guests will play in an open division.

Non-Rotarians will have a separate division but will be eligible to win any of the hole-in-one prizes and the raffle. They will be allowed entry to nightly dinners and cocktails and the launching of the new RGFFP logo.

Practice rounds are set on Jan. 12-14.

Billiards meet at Podium

AT least 60 budding billiards players are expected to participate in the 9-Ball Billiards Open Championship tomorrow at the Elbow Room located at the 5th level of the The Podium in Mandaluyong City.

Entries will battle each other in a race-to-five, sudden death knockout format with the top two players advancing into the championship round.

The two finalists will also have the chance to challenge back-to-back Tokyo 9-Ball Open champion Antonio "Gaga" Gabica in the "Search for Tanduay, the No. 1 Billiards Player." Registration fee is P100.

Fash gets . . .

From page A21

back until the closing moments of the game.

Scores:

First game:

FASH 61—Gelig 20, Simon 13, Salangsang 9, Alvarez 6, Tan 6, Gonzales 5, Dualan 2, Moore 0, Tenorio 0, Fonacier 0, Dy 0, Mercado 0.

VIVA 56—Margate 11, Santos 8, Ybañez 8, Garcia 7, Jones 6, Miranda 6, Co 4, Isip 4, Sinco 2, Misolas 0, Rizada 0.

Quarters: 18-12, 27-26, 44-42, 61-56.

Second game:

WELCOAT 90—Sotto 17, Tangkay 13, Reyes 10, Pingris 9, Yap 9, Wilson 8, Omolon 7, Kalaw 6, Artadi 4, Cuan 4, Coching 3, Capus 0, Celo 0, Latoreno 0.

MONTAÑA 64—Magpayo 17, David 11, Enrile 10, Basco 6, Allad 5, Salvador 4, Guerrero 3, Baluyot 2, Magsumbol 2, Coronel 2, Capati 2, Sayon 0, Saniel 0.

Quarters: 26-14; 52-33; 73-44; 90-64.

In God's name

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

POCH Suzara writes to say he liked my piece on Mike Royko a while back (01-02-04).

Said Suzara, who listed his cell phone number as 0916-5724788: "It was good of you to have reprinted Mike Royko's 'DEAR GOD: WHY?' Thank you. I read that article in the Los Angeles Times in 1981. I wrote to Mr. Royko then and told him that since God is everywhere, the weapon of unbelief should be enough to see God dead. Specially together with the other supernatural moron always in cahoots with God—the devil."

To those who missed the column, Mike Royko wrote about the foolishness of many people all around the world killing each other in the name of God. It was a satire, a virtual indictment of the stupidity of people using their religion as reason to kill other people opposed to their religion. He cited Muslims and Catholics killing each other in the name of God, Catholics and Protestants killing each other in the name of God, Palestinians and Israelites killing each other in the name of God. Maybe, if Mike Royko were still around, he might have also written that 9/11 that had killed thousands in New York City was done in the name of God.

In sports, some people also try to hurt—if not kill—not only in the name of victory, but also God.

"I did it because of my love for God," one winner—a player or a coach maybe—would say in answer to a query from a sportswriter about how it feels winning the championship. "Without God's help, I would not have achieved this victory."

I have yet to hear a loser say, "I lost because God does not love me." Or, "God was not on my side today." Blasphemous, if not sacrilegious.

The truth is, most protagonists pray fervently for God to make them winners. Then usually the winner would next praise God, the loser would just keep quiet; very few losers find it in their heart to still praise God. I know of one who is like that: Rudy Salud.

When he was still manager of Gerry Peñalosa, Rudy Salud prayed the rosary before bedtime every night each time Gerry was preparing for a fight. I know. A couple of years ago, I prayed with him nightly for a week inside a hotel room in Tokyo, together with George Alcantara and Rudy's son, Chito. When Gerry lost the fight, Rudy Salud enjoined us again to pray the rosary. After the rosary, he praised God. Said Rudy Salud: "Thank you very much Dear God and Mama Mary. Despite our setback, we will never ever take it against you. I know that with this defeat, you have other plans for me and Gerry."

I was touched by Rudy Salud's magnanimity and his unwavering belief in God and Mama Mary.

Not long after, Rudy Salud broke up with Gerry Peñalosa.

"I guess we are not cut out for each other," said Rudy in explaining the termination of his contract with Gerry. "We seem to not have the right chemistry of partnership. But despite the breakup, Gerry and I will always be friends."

I recently heard that Gerry Peñalosa, a former world champion himself, is planning to stage a comeback—under a different manager. Like politicians, boxers are also among the hardest to retire. Good luck, Gerry.

Like most boxers I know, Gerry prays hard before every fight. He goes to church in the morning of the day of his fights. Which means, like most boxers I know, Gerry is God-fearing.

That cannot be said of Poch Suzara, who is a self-confessed non-believer of God. Said Poch: "I am happy to have been born an atheist as I will be even happier to die an atheist."

Religion is one topic that can raise hell that, well, I believe there is wisdom in what a friend of mine has said about a rule in force inside the officer's room of a Navy ship: Never talk about politics, women and religion. Indeed, all three are dangerous topics, particularly to those who can't rein in their tongue.

Even talking about sports may also be dangerous. Especially if an athlete relies mainly on God's help to win games. That tends to make champions out of lazy warriors.

SPORTSWATCH

Singh surges past Appleby

SINGH AP

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Vijay Singh is playing as if they're still counting votes for PGA Tour player of the year. Playing the best golf of his life, Singh finished with seven straight birdies Friday for a 9-under 64 to surge past Stuart Appleby and into the lead at the season-opening Mercedes Championships. Singh was at 14-under 132 and had a one-shot lead over Appleby in what was shaping up as a two-man race going into the weekend on the Plantation course at Kapalua. Appleby birdied the two par 5s after that and finished with a 67. Darren Clarke recovered from a double bogey on the first hole for a 69 and was at 10-under 136. Tiger Woods, who barely beat out Singh for player of the year, hit some unfamiliar shots that left him in a familiar position—trying to catch the big Fijian. Woods lost his opening tee shot and made double bogey, missed a 4-foot par putt on the next and spent the rest of the day trying to make up lost ground. He wound up with a 3-under 70 and was nine shots behind. *AP*

Araneta derby starts tomorrow

LEADING cockers collide anew on Monday and Wednesday (Jan. 12 and 14) as the third leg of NCA 7-Cock Derby Series unfolds at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. To field their entries are new NCA members Raymond Velayo, Max and Bebot Roxas, Franklin and Benjamin Bautista, Jun Velasco, Alex Tang, movie actor Edu Manzano, Mauro Prieto, Ronnie Puno, Pepito Ngo, Boy Royo, Biboy Enriquez and Efren Canlas. Also seeing action are Eddie Araneta, Gov. Ito Ynares, Rep. Rudy Albano, Pico Berin, Firefly Group, Mario Villamayor, Louie Cua, Jun Jingco, JV Magsaysay, Rudy Albano, Gerry Ramos, Rene Medina, Edgar Santos, Rep. Claude Bautista, Frank Berin, Matt Bittanga, John Capinpin, William Co, Boy de Roca, Alex Escalona, Gerry Escalona, Pol Estrellado, Feliciano Brothers, Jet Fernando, Joel Fernando, Ric de Guzman, Boy Jiao and Edwin Jingco, among others. Derby hosts are Rep. Rudy Albano and engineer Pico Berin. Submission of weights is today (Jan. 11, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.) at the Araneta green gate. For inquiries, contact 911-3101 and 911-2928.

Roligon tourney lures big field

CONFIRMED entries with cockhouse reservations have started to swell in connection with Roligon Mega Cockpit's 14th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby slated on Jan. 31, Feb. 3, 5, 7, 10 and 12. A big cast of more than 400 entries is expected to vie for the staggering prize of P3.6 million, which is guaranteed by top promoter Rolly Ligon. A participant may choose to field an entry during the elimination rounds (3-cock) scheduled on Jan. 31, Feb. 3 and 5 at 7 p.m. The semifinals is set for Feb. 10 and the finals on Feb. 12. Entry fee is P11,000 while minimum bet is P5,500. The champion handler and gaffer gets P200,000 and P100,000, respectively. Likewise, the following bonus prizes are at stake: fastest kill champion, P300,000; second, P150,000; third, P100,000 and fourth, P50,000. Elimination round champions will share in the P100,000 prize per day. For cockhouse reservation, contact 833-2275 and 833-1638.

Pasay 4-cock meet set Jan. 16

SMALLTIME and medium-scale cockers will be gunning for a jackpot guaranteed prize of P500,000 in Pasay City Cockpit's "Malilitan Lang 4-Cock Derby" this coming Friday, Jan. 16. At least 70 participants have firmed up their commitment to join, according to promoters Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola. Entry fee is P6,600 while minimum bet is P3,300. Submission of weights is on Jan. 15 only, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For other details, contact 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750. The event will start at 10 a.m. sharp. The latest batch of confirmed entries include Nono San Pablo of Bicol, Dong Palileo of Las Piñas, Evelyn Caparas of Parañaque, Danny Sarmiento of Laguna, Frankie Tan of Bacolod, Tony Leyba of Mandaluyong, Manny Dayrit of Batangas, Alma Pineda of Pateros, Arnel Geronga of Bulacan, among others. Backing up the derby are Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Mite Free.

BASKETBALL CHAMPS. Burlington socks honcho Rudy Tan (2nd from left) congratulates coach Johnny Tam for steering RP-FedEx to victory in the 5th General Cheng Zhengdong Cup in Nanan City, China, last month. Holding the championship trophy are FedEx's Johnny Ferriols and Ryan Bernardo. At left is Teddy Pereña while at right is assistant coach Eric King. Not in photo is assistant coach Ching Marcelino.

BADMINTON BUFFS. Pacific Internet's lovely duo of Fritzy Fernandez and Duckee Timario in action during last month's Pioneer Badminton Xmas tournament. Pioneer Badminton is opening its membership to interested parties. For details, call 746-0828 or 638-5343.

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1 Solo Singer 2. Earth Wind N Fire 3. Macho Guwapito/Golden Tiger 4. Mr. Bonjing
Race 2—1. Material Maker 2. Key Apo 3. Southern Charm
Race 3—1. I Love This Game 2. Queen Matawe 3. I Swear 4. Gallil
Race 4—1. Twin Brother 2. Game Over 3. Zero Gravity 4. Impromptu 5. Hurry Putter
Race 5—1. Music Express 2. Hurricane Doding 3. Speed Battle 4. Golden Quest
Race 6—1. Earl Gray 2. Adam's Call 3. Surprise Target
Race 7—1. Bukambibig 2. Rose and Toy 3. Ahead of Time 4. Premiere Stock 5. Traktora
Race 8—1. War Hero 2. Royal Catch 3. Arriba King
Race 9—1. Andee's Tome 2. My Sheikh 3. Binibini 4. Profit Master 5. Never Enough
Race 10—1. Golden Eagle 2. Harry's Up 3. Conquer D Sun
Race 11—1. Il Amorosa 2. Really Cool 3. Prickly Heat 4. Golden Prince 5. Hurry Prince
Race 12—1. Silakbo 2. Blue Sheikh 3. Close Account 4. Free Again 5. Native Prince
Race 13—1. Sandali Lang 2. Sunny Sky 3. Shotgun Banjo 4. Dreams of Flame
Race 14—1. Power and Might 2. Touch of Luck 3. Sir Lawrence 4. Ocean Menary 5. Mystika 6. Big Mama

US bets retain Hopman Cup

BLAKE celebrates after scoring a point in the mix doubles. AFP

PERTH, Australia—The United States, featuring James Blake and Lindsay Davenport, won the Hopman Cup team tennis championship for the second year in a row Saturday with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Slovakia in the deciding mixed doubles.

Davenport put the United States on track for back-to-back titles with a 6-3, 6-1 singles win over Daniela Hantuchova. Slovakia's Karol Kucera came from 3-0 down in the deciding set to beat Blake, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (5), leveling the final at 1-1.

Blake, who teamed with Serena Williams to win the tournament last year, and Davenport dominated in mixed doubles before a capacity crowd of 8,500 at the indoor Burswood Dome to give the Americans a 2-1 edge in the final.

Former Australian Open champion Davenport hit 12 aces and beat Hantuchova in 51 minutes. It was Blake's first singles loss in the tournament this year.

Slovakia advanced to the final when Australia, which finished first in its group, had to withdraw due to Alicia Molik's foot injury. Belgium had to pull out on Wednesday because of a similar injury to Kim Clijsters.

Serena pulls out

Meanwhile, former world number one Serena Williams has pulled out of the Australian Open because of injury, tournament organizers announced on Saturday.

Officials said the American had withdrawn because of complications with a knee problem that was operated on in August.

"She has withdrawn citing rehabilitation of her left knee, Tennis Australia spokesperson John Lindsay said.

The world No. 3, the winner of six grand slam titles, won the Australian Open for the first time last year but has not played a competitive match since July when she won her second Wimbledon title.

She told the Women's Tennis Association that her knee felt good but her training staff had advised her not to play because of the risk of further damage. *AP, Reuters*

Cable TV's new sports channel launched today

AVID golfers and fans of baseball, soccer and American football now have a sports channel of their own.

Solar Entertainment Corp., the company behind the Solar Sports network, is launching a new sports channel on cable television today. Called "Sports Plus," it offers round-the-clock programming built around PGA Tour golf, Major League Baseball, US NCAA basketball, Euroleague basketball, Nascar racing, National Football League, AMF bowling, horse racing and extreme sports. Sports Plus also offers NBA games twice a week, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Initially available on Destiny Cable (Channel 17), Sports Plus kicks off its programming today with live and exclusive coverage of the Mercedes Open, the PGA Tour's first tournament for 2004. Daily coverage is at 8 a.m. today until Monday, with replays at 8 p.m.

The winners-only field features nine of the top 10 players in the Official World Golf Rankings, including top-ranked Tiger Woods and No. 2 Ernie Els, the tournament's defending champion.

"Sports Plus will feature year-round coverage of the PGA Tour spanning over 50 tournaments as well as 30 Champions Tour events," said Solar chairman Wilson Tieng. "We are also very excited to bring full-season coverage of Major League Baseball, NFL and Nascar racing here in the Philippines."

Sports Plus will feature the Sony Open in Hawaii on Jan. 16-18.

Earlier this month, Solar also launched the NBA League Pass, a premium cable TV service that offers die-hard NBA fans as many as 56 additional NBA games a month, including three "live" games on Saturdays and Sundays.

"These are games that are exclusive to NBA League Pass and in addition to the regularly scheduled games you see on Solar Sports, ESPN, Star Sports and Sports Plus," said Tieng.

This month, NBA League Pass features five Los Angeles Lakers games, three games each of the Sacramento Kings, Dallas Mavericks and Minnesota Timberwolves and two games of the New Jersey Nets and Cleveland Cavaliers. These are the NBA's most popular teams in terms of TV ratings, merchandising sales and gate attendance.

Laguna race set April 25

THE SAN Pedro Team Unified Sports Association will stage the Laguna Marathon 2004 on April 25 starting at 4:30 a.m. in front of the Pavilion Mall in Biñan, Laguna.

SPTUSA president Romel "Jing" Anchoriz said the event, now on its second year, will again feature 10-K and 3-K competitions and an additional 5-K race.

Sponsoring the 4-in-1 race are Balfour Beatty Cleveland JV headed by Philippine director Grahame Coles, Sen. Robert Jaworski, Biñan Mayor Hermis "Boy" Perez, Calamba Mayor Binoy Lajara, San Pedro Vice Mayor Celso Ambayec and SPTUSA chair Louie Mangahis. For details, call Anchoriz at 868-7588 and 0920-8506550; Mangahis at 0916-6604727 and treasurer/race director Abet Alon-Alon at 0920-2862195.

The 'Sapang Palay Kid'

(No major event is scheduled today at the Santa Ana Park but the Philippine Racing Club Inc. has put up a "pang-festival" lineup of 14 superbly handicapped races. The bayang karerista made no mistake in voting the PRCI as the "Racetrack/Club of the Year 2003.")

ONE WINNER

Edwin Villanueva

A KARERISTA from the Pines City is one of our early e-mail senders for the year.

Mr. Archie Nuqui wrote to inquire about the newly formed WHIP and made suggestions to "spur the growth of local racing." Here's his letter:

Dear Mr. Villanueva,

As an avid racing fan, I was pleasantly surprised when I read in the papers that the Writers of Horseracing in the Philippines (WHIP) was formed, with you as president. I am writing you to inquire and give my unsolicited suggestions on matters pertaining to the local racing industry, as follows:

1. Does WHIP have plans to set up and maintain a website or online publication? If it does not have yet, I strongly suggest that you consider the matter. Knowing the sad reality of working and living in foreign countries (I worked in Indonesia for about four years and in the Democratic Republic of Congo for one and a half years), I am sure such website/online publication would bring enormous joy and a legitimate source of entertainment for those Filipino OFWs who are avid racing fans. With the Philippine government hailing the Filipino OFWs as present day heroes, it should be a piece of cake for you media practitioners to solicit government support in various forms in setting up and maintaining this website/online publication. Ditto for sponsorship from private corporations. I'd be more than glad to contribute my ideas on this website/online publication if and when WHIP decides to consider the matter seriously;

2. The local racing industry has been posting impressive growth in annual gross sales, with the government benefiting tremendously in the form of taxes generated. I would like to suggest two steps that should further spur growth in the industry not only in terms of gross sales but also in the number of jobs generated, especially in the downstream horse breeding industry:

a. Revive the move to ask the government to slash its take on the gross sales. Complimented with sound race handicapping by both racing clubs, this should further sweeten the pot for local punters and make the races more interesting.

b. Beam the races live nationwide on cable TV, if not on local TV. Why limit the industry to Metro Manila and suburbs when there is the Visayas and Mindanao to grow into? The proposed website above would also do its share in popularizing the sport in the entire country. Who knows, in a few more years, racing centers could be operating in the Visayas and Mindanao simultaneous with those in Luzon?

Thanks a lot and more power to you and the WHIP.

Archie Nuqui
Baguio City

***

Thank you very much for writing, Mr. Nuqui.

Yes, setting up a website is one of the WHIP's main priorities. Hopefully, you and your *karerista*-friends may start surfing by next month or March and let's hope your suggestions are read by our racing officials.

***

After some years of waiting in the wings, Louie Balboa finally got the go signal to ride last Tuesday. And he notched win No. 1 right on his second ride.

The 25-year-old promising apprentice from San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan scored atop Hermie Esguerra's Reigns Supreme in the third race after being out of the money aboard Really Cool in Race 1.

After landing second on top Nothing to Declare in Race 7 last Wednesday night, Balboa vowed to try his very best to tally more victories for the powerhouse Esguerra stable.

"*Pipilitin ko pong manalo pa para kay* Boss Hermie. *Nagpapasalamat ako sa kanya dahil sa* break *na ibinigay niya sa akin*," he said.

Keep an eye on the "Sapang Palay Kid."

Arman Gonzales, Lito Tornandizo and Eddie "Buleyt" Cinco chorused that Balboa is as good as Jeff Zarate, his batchmate in the academy.

***

Is it true that Zarate is already out of the Esguerra Stable and that Pat Dilema, who was once himself kicked out of the noted stable, will be re-hired to be its No. 1 rider again?

Remember that Dilema was sacked for his dubious ride on Wind Blown some two years back and now comes this rumor. And if Dilema is donning the Esguerra silks again, won't Dhunoy Raquel be far behind?

As for Zarate, I already dispatched my Silip Boy to get his side which will hopefully see print here next Sunday.

Record sales registered at Carmona racetrack

RECORD sales of more than P188 million was set at the Manila Jockey Club Inc's San Lazaro Leisure Park during its recent grand yearend racing extravaganza from Dec. 22-28.

The record six-day sales amounted to P188,755,928, which easily eclipsed the previous record high of P181,951,130 set by the Philippine Racing Club Inc. (PRCI) for its Dec. 16-21 race program.

"The management and staff of MJCI would like to thank the racing fans for their continuing support of our racing programs. Rest assured that they can look forward to better and more exciting races for 2004 at the new home of championship racing," said MJCI vice president for corporate management Henri S. Kahn.

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DID YOU KNOW...

Former sweethearts **Marc Nelson** and **Patricia Javier** were seen having lunch together at the Little Asia restaurant on Tomas Morato in Quezon City one recent Sunday. They were dining with the restaurant's owners.

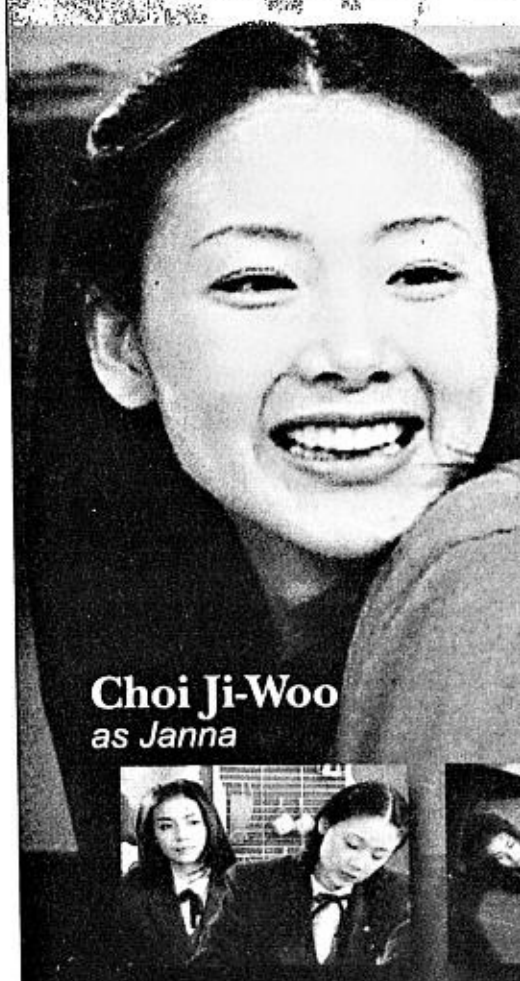
OPENS JANUARY 21
HUMANS VS. VAMPIRES,
ONLY THE STRONGEST WILL SURVIVE.
CHARLENE CHOI GILLIAN CHUNG
with the special participation of
JACKY CHAN

MAGIC 89.9
THE TWINS EFFECT

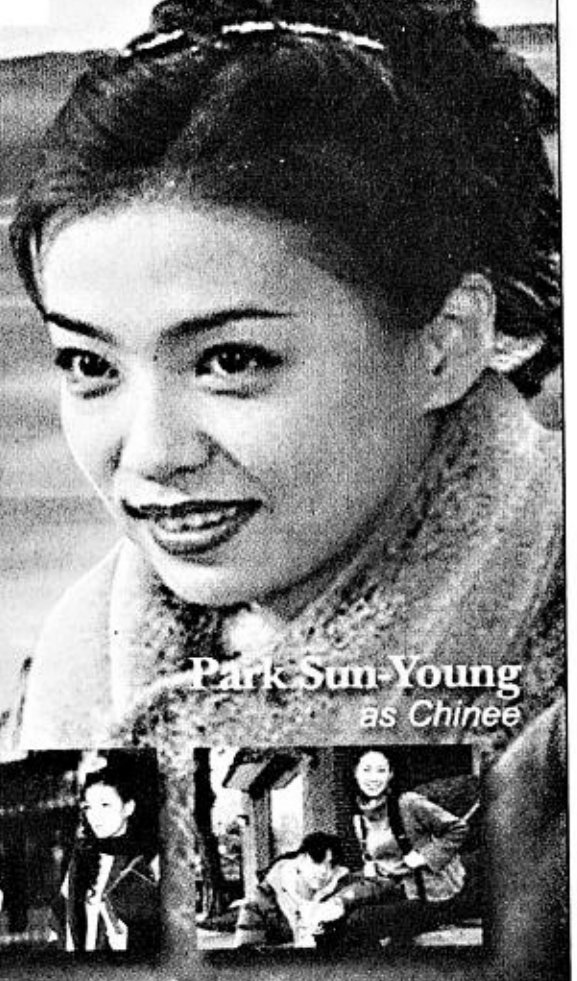
TOMORROW
You will know The TRUTH!

Si Chinee, tunuring ni Janna na kaibigan pero pilit siyang sisiraan.
Aangkinin ni Chinee ang lahat ng para kay Janna. Pati ang kinabukasan at lalaking mamahalin niya.
Isang gabing sakay si Janna, nagmamaneho nang lasing si Chinee. May nabundol na isang inosente.
Para iligtas ang malaking kasalanan, gagawa si Chinee ng paraan upang madiin si Janna sa salang wala siyang kinalaman.
Paano makakamit ni Janna ang inaasam na kalayaan kung bangungot ng mortal na kaaway
niyang si Chinee ang gatusi sa katotohanan?

Everybody wants nothing but...
The Truth



Choi Ji-Woo
as Janna



Park Sun-Young
as Chinee

Magsisimula na bukas!
Bago mag-TV Patrol
ABS-CBN

KENKOY KLASIKS by Tony Velasquez celebrating 75 years

ALIWAN 1936 from the LOPEZ MUSEUM collection / Courtesy of KOMIKS CAFE / INQ EDITION 1.11.04

TO BE CONTINUED tomorrow

MASAGANANG BAGONG TAON ni Kenkoy 1936

Postscript to a film festival

JUICE

Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon

I MUST confess I didn't score perfectly. I missed "Homecoming" and "Gagamboy," and saw only the second half of "Malikmata."

(Anyone who thinks running a monthly magazine is a laidback kind of life knows zilch. As YES! executive editor **Pete Lacaba** said on a day he had to pass up a scriptwriting job for lack of time, "When I joined YES!, I thought I had signed up for a monthly, but I feel like I'm working in a daily!")

With the two days and a half I had open, I whizzed in and out of moviehouses to catch the rest of the Metro Manila Film Festival entries. Now I'm dizzy, but honestly I feel good—even about the movies I didn't like.

See, the movies I got to see all looked well-done. Crafted with care all the way to post-production, with an appreciation for logic, a strong attention to setting, a good feel for dialogue, and just overall respect for the audience.

'Filipinas'

Take "Filipinas." It was clear the producers gave the director whatever he needed. The party scenes, demos, bands, and camp training didn't look cheap, that helicopter ride looked genuine, there were more than the expected military and townsfolk extras, certainly Israel wasn't faked, and it had enough big stars to burn the celluloid screen.

No, the movie wasn't cheap. But it did ask for too much.

For it asked us to sit there and take in the relentless, unrelieved, punishing political schooling. Look, I have nothing against politics in cinema. Quite the opposite. I have long adored Costa-Gavras and Gillo Pontecorvo, but I think the reason "Z" and "Battle of Algiers" were precisely so good was that, in the midst of all that severe, sustained politics, they were at their core: cinema. They told their stories well, with non-cardboard characters, with conflicts, if not causes, laid out with reason and feeling, and these they told against backdrops that were textured and yet panoramic, and maybe even epic.

"Filipinas" told the panorama of a family, but ended up explaining nothing about the family and everything about the politics. Every character represented an issue; every conflict, a malaise; every scene, a confrontation. Halfway through the film, I truly couldn't see the people for the cause. At the end of it, I could barely empathize. It was like being made to embrace all of humankind but none of the human beings—because they weren't there.

'Captain Barbell'

"Captain Barbell" had the same gloss. It had thoughtfully designed special effects and makeup, not to mention pyrotechnics; it packed in enough major villains, each costumed very busily; and **Bong Revilla** did trim down to fit into that body suit.

But something was amiss: its tone. It had a rape scene where the pleas for help and the leeriness were too long and too real. It had too much blood, particularly on **Epy Quizon**, who was made to suffer a surplus of in-your-face cruelty. It also had too many dirty rats and too much grime and goo for one movie. And had too much boobs on **Rufa Mae**, besides. Why, one almost feared her areolas would peek any moment! On top of that, it had very direct advertising of mysdl.

And this was a kiddie film! For young ones below 13!

Sure, the movie must be given credit for bothering to give the villains a personal history, which made them sympathetic initially. But once they became villains, they were so over-the-top evil, one wonders why the movie bothered to give them any personal history at all.

'Mano Po 2'

The film with equally major production values that fared better was "Mano Po 2."

Of course, my friend **Joseph Lim** was not so sure. Having grown up around very Chinese sensibilities, he found the story flawed: **Zsa Zsa**, full Chinese, would have been the dominant wife straightaway in a real Chinese setting; **Kris**, full Pinoy, would have been cast aside; **Lorna**, Chinoy, would have flirted differently to begin with; and everyone would have been using a different accent, most especially those from the mainland.

For although the Chinese have one script, says Joseph, accents from region to region change words and meanings so dramatically that a Chinese from Fukien would not understand someone from Canton. And, among still other issues, there was the little matter of the wedding held during the Cultural Revolution: the period would never have lent itself to such color and pageantry.

My own objection had to do with the too much forgiving going around in the end. Not because I don't believe in satellite families and multiple mistresses uniting, but because nothing prepared us for it. Where did all the altruism come from? The third wife lost a son—and all is forgiven? What about the families she broke up and the ill wind she had long poisoned the other women's children with? The writers should have made the Zsa Zsa character hold back her welcome, at the very least.

Then there was the matter of Kris looking younger than the other two wives when she was supposed to be the first and oldest, and of **Susan Roces**, as the older Kris, looking way older than everyone in the end, including her husband **Christopher de Leon**, who first appeared in the film looking older than her character did.

And the other matter of **Richard Gutierrez**'s character. Richard needed more directing, and if he'd gotten it, we might not have been dislocated by his suicide. As it was, he came on like a regular enough boy, who, except for one mad flash of his eyes toward the end, never hinted at the fatal violence within.

Still, "Mano Po" went off to tell a grand tearjerker, and by the rules of a tearjerker, succeeded hugely.

'Fantastic Man'

On the other hand, "Fantastic Man" was not a glossy. Its humor was more everyday, *kanto* stuff, its devices not terribly high-tech, and its villains, except maybe for **Ara Mina**'s phantasmagoric look, were less extreme than the villains in "Captain Barbell."

But precisely because of this, the film was easier to relate to. It had a more Pinoy feel than "Captain Barbell"—the same way you might say that the down-home cooking of the *carinderia* is more Pinoy than the assembly-line efficiency of McDo.

The final big difference may yet be in this: While **Vic Sotto** played it light and funny, Bong Revilla took the humor out of his mission entirely.

All told my favorites were "Bridal Shower" and "Crying Ladies." But right now, I'm clear out of space, and am dizzy again, only this time it's from delirious delight over Jeturian and Meily.

MTRCB RATING: PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

WINNER BEST PICTURE

HILDA KORONEL and ANGEL AQUINO
SHARON CUNETA
ERIC QUIZON RICKY DAVAO
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A MARK MEILY FILM
CRYING LADIES
a heartwarming comedy

Winner of the BEST PICTURE AWARD in the 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival, and the only entry GRADED-A by the Cinema Evaluation Board.

A Tony Gloria Production

www.cryingladies.com

Willie surpasses himself with FPJ impersonation

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST week on **Pia Hontiveros**' "Strictly Politics" TV show, the country's master impersonator, **Willie Nepomuceno** unveiled his latest and one of his best creations, FPJ.

Willie's newest impersonation was so dead-on that he had the usually straight-faced Pia dissolving into giggles, something that rarely happens on the no-nonsense interview and panel discussion show.

As Willie's FPJ held forth—incidentally, talking much more than the real FPJ ever has since declaring his intention to run for the presidency—our admiration for Willie's feat grew, because he soon went beyond simple mimicry, to even trying to think and feel like the movie king-turned-presidential candidate.

Thus, the performance was more total characterization than plain impersonation, and in pulling it off, Willie effectively left most other impersonators far behind.

But it was no easy victory on his part. As he answered Pia's questions, we could see the work, analysis, planning and rehearsal sessions that went into his FPJ clone.

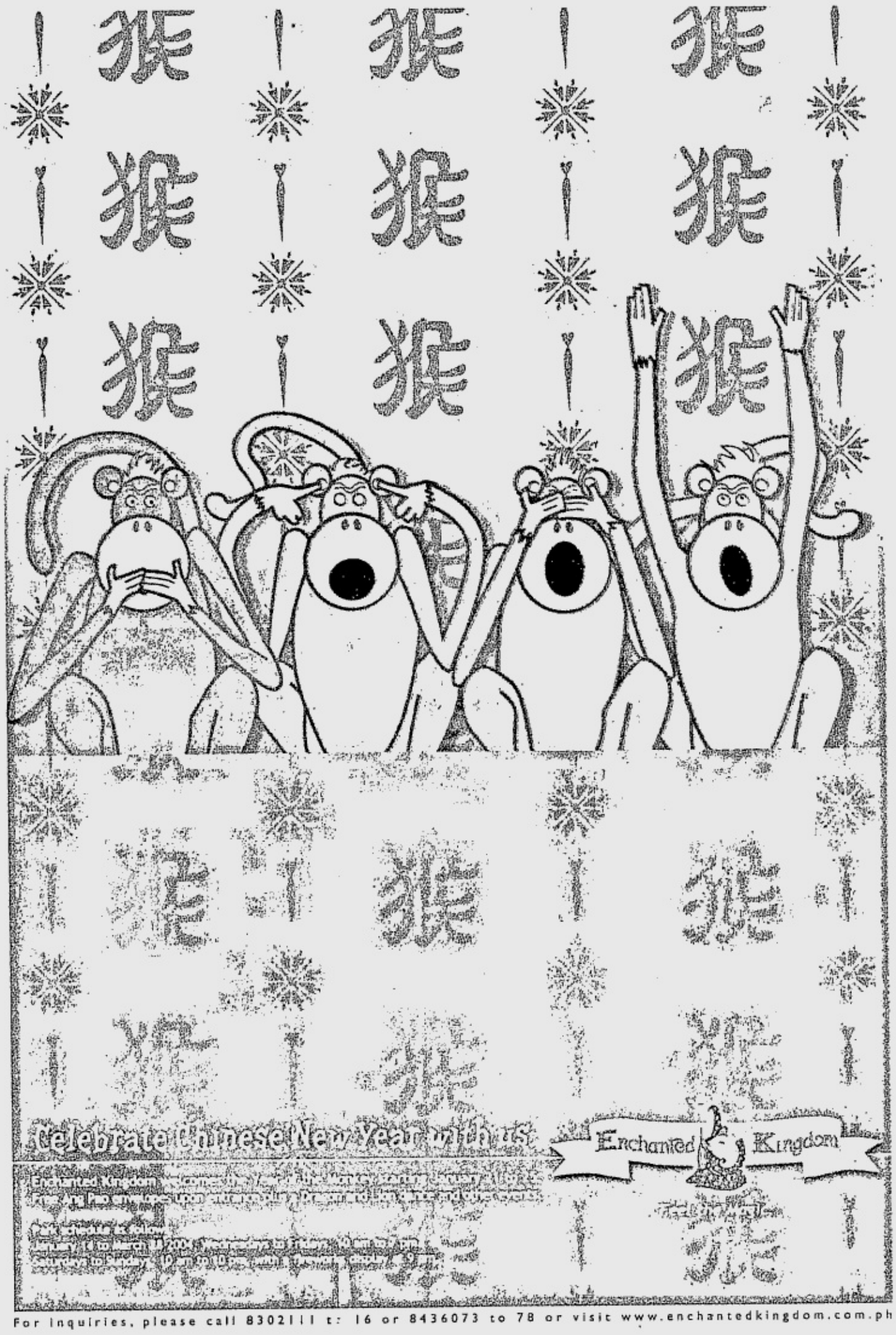
In terms of looks, the hair was curly, and Willie could have added volume to his cheeks to make himself look more like the movie king.

FPJ's stance and signature gestures, Willie got down pat. His sidelong stare at his interviewer, his patented slouch—everything was done to fine turn. Willie's version of FPJ's soft and yet husky voice and vocal inflections was downright convincing.

But it was Willie's "ad-libs" as FPJ that elicited out heartiest admiration. This is improv at its best, and goes way beyond the basic improvisation exercises being done in some comedy clubs.

Willie's FPJ is worth the long

WILLIE/ A26



For inquiries, please call 8302111 loc. 16 or 8436073 to 78 or visit www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph

Trisha remembered in 'Family Day Out'

THE TRISHA P. Borromeo's Legacy Association Inc., with Nickelodeon the TV channel for kids, the Adidas Sports Kamp, and the Gorgeous Group of Companies present "A Family Day Out for a Cause" today, from 10 a.m., at the NBC Tent, Fort Global City, Taguig. The day-long affair commemorates the passing away of Trisha on Jan. 8, 2003. It features celebrity storytellers, game booths, sports clinics and more.

Capping off the day will be a concert featuring the Sound Authority, Kulai Kahon, Sugar Shack, Diether Ocampo with Blow, and Side A.

The UP-PGH Pediatric Cancer Ward will benefit from the event. Tickets are P250 per family member, but kids under 1 year and *yayas* get in for free.

Willie surpasses . . .

From page A25

and difficult gestation process because he's a character whom Willie can mine for pointed political laughs for at least some months—and, if FPJ tops the polls, even years!

If FPJ does win, Willie's version of him could become fodder for the sort of pokerfaced rumors about **Ferdinand Marcos** and his impersonator then, **Vic Pacia.**

The rumor-mongers swore that, when FM was too busy to attend an official function, or a public engagement was fraught with danger, Pacia's FM was sent to stand in for him.

Willie Nep as (President) FPJ's official clone and schedule lightener in the years to come? The (comedic) plot thickens!

walked in, and within two minutes, we knew he was our man. He had the bearing, and in his face you can see compassion, humor and sadness."

"The Last Samurai" opens Jan. 21.

'A Stun of Islands'

Amadis Ma. Guerrero's new travel book, "A Stun of Islands," will be launched at 6 p.m. on Jan. 15 at the Art Plaza, Shangri-la Plaza Mall.

'Grethology'

"Grethology," Gantimpala's musical about the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology, resumes its run at the AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo from Jan. 16 to 18, with performances at 9 a.m., 12 noon and 3 p.m.

Other performances are on Jan. 24, 25 and 31 at RFC Theater, and Feb. 6 to 8 at AFP. Leads include **Roy Rolloda** as Zeus, **Jinky Llamanzares** as Medusa and **Paula Ferrer** as Aphrodite.

9501 Preview Room

Last Jan. 8, the Preview Room at Restaurant 9501 (14th floor, ELJ Communications Center, Mother Ignacia Avenue, Quezon City) was inaugurated with a preview screening of "Kill Bill." The state-of-the-art audio-visual facility is described as "the only dinner theater within a restaurant in Metro Manila."

'The Last Samurai'

With **Tom Cruise** topbilling "The Last Samurai" and thus assuring good box office, director **Ed Zwick** decided to cast Japanese actors in key roles. He took the longest time finding an actor to play the key role of the noble 18th-century warrior, Katsumoto.

As the film's story unfolds, Katsumoto captures Cruise's character, Capt. Nathan Algren, a disillusioned American mercenary charged with training Japan's newly westernized Imperial Army. Under Katsumoto's tutelage, Algren learns to value the Samurai code of honor, in battle and in peace.

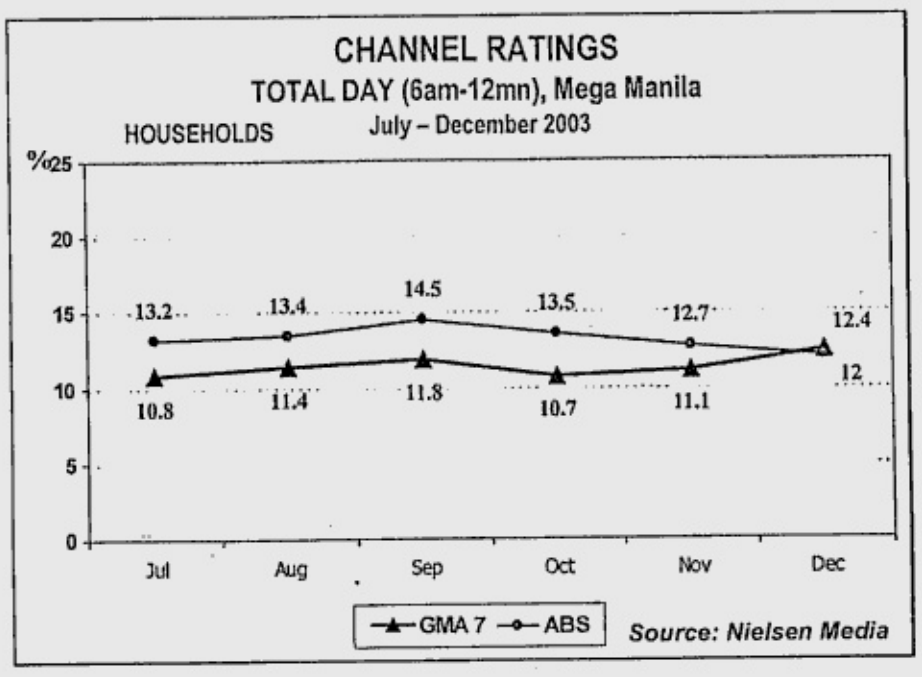
Zwick had a hard time casting the pivotal role. "I was despairing," he sighs. "If you don't have a great Kashimoto, you don't have a film. As powerful as Tom is, he must have someone to play against. Then **Ken Watanabe**

DAHIL KAYO ANG NO. 1 SA AMIN,
KAYO ANG UNA NAMING PASASALAMATAN

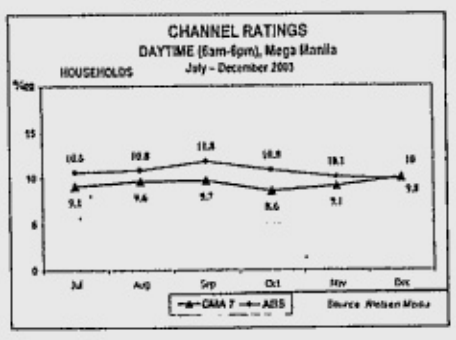
Maraming Salamat sa Tagumpay na Ito, mga KAPUSO!

GMA NETWORK

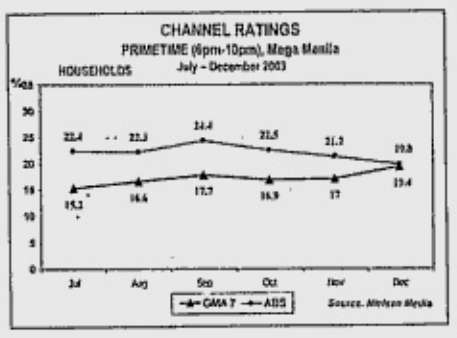
NO. 1 TOTAL DAY (7 days a week)



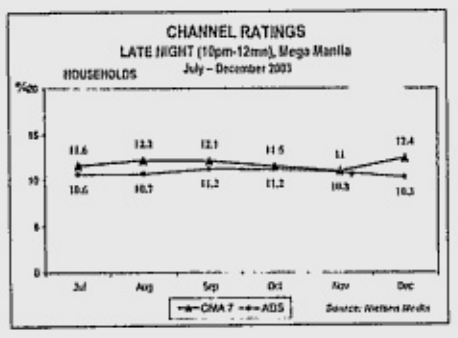
DAYTIME



PRIMETIME



LATE NIGHT



6 OUT OF THE TOP 10 DAYTIME PROGRAMS

TOP 10 DAYTIME PROGRAMS
6AM-6PM
Mega Manila, December 2003

Rank	Program	Channel	Household Rating
1	GHOST FIGHTER	GMA-7	17.8
2	EAT BULAGA	GMA-7	17.3
3	DAISY SIETE	GMA-7	17.3
4	ETERNITY A CHINESE GHOST STORY	ABS-CBN	16.6
5	GATA SALVAJE	ABS-CBN	14.4
6	MEET OR GARDEN REWIND	ABS-CBN	13.8
7	WALANG HANGGAN	GMA-7	13.7
8	SUPER YOYO	GMA-7	13.6
9	CLICK	GMA-7	13.4
10	ALTAGRACIA	ABS-CBN	13.4

Source: Nielsen Media Data

5 OUT OF THE TOP 10 EVENING PROGRAMS

TOP 10 EVENING PROGRAMS
6PM-12MN
Mega Manila, December 2003

Rank	Program	Channel	Household Rating
1	[illegible]	ABS-CBN	23.3
2	STARSTRUCK	GMA-7	22.8
3	ENDLESS LOVE II WINTER SONATA	GMA-7	22.8
4	[illegible]	ABS-CBN	22.2
5	[illegible]	ABS-CBN	21.7
6	IMBESTIGADOR	GMA-7	21.4
7	NARITO ANG PUSO KO	GMA-7	21.0
8	EXTRA CHALLENGE	GMA-7	21.0
9	TV PATROL	ABS-CBN	20.8
10	NEXT LEVEL NA GAME KA NA	ABS-CBN	20.7

Source: Nielsen Media Data

6 OUT OF THE TOP 10 NEWS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

TOP 10 NEWS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
Mega Manila, December 2003

Rank	Program	Channel	Household Ratings
1	IMBESTIGADOR	GMA-7	21.4
2	TV PATROL	ABS-CBN	20.8
3	MAGANDANG GABI BAYAN	ABS-CBN	20.1
4	FRONTPAGE ULAT NI MEL TIANGCO	GMA-7	17.6
5	SAKSI	GMA-7	11.8
6	EMERGENCY	GMA-7	9.9
7	JESSICA SOHO REPORTS	GMA-7	7.7
8	[illegible]	ABS-CBN	7.4
9	I-WITNESS	GMA-7	4.7
10	SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT	ABS-CBN	4.5

Source: Nielsen Media Data

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2004

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

ABS-CBN won't let composer sell 'Otso-otso'

By Marinel R. Cruz

ONLY ABS-CBN is keeping President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who is running in May, from using the popular song "Otso-otso" as her campaign jingle, according to its composer.

Singer-composer Lito Camo on Friday said he's willing to sell to the President the right to use his song, but ABS-CBN has told him to wait for the network's decision before letting his song become part of the elections.

"ABS-CBN told me to wait because they have other plans for the song," said Camo. "Why won't they say yes? Melody *lang naman 'yun*. They wouldn't be able to run after politicians who would use the song as a campaign jingle in the provinces, anyway."

But Star Records managing director Enrico Santos explained that the network is "simply strategizing carefully the best options for the song."

"Lito Camo is a prolific and creative composer," Santos said, "and naturally it is in his best interest to maximize the revenues for his song. We would like to provide him the best possibilities for his song."

Santos noted that Camo's composition "has opened many opportunities in the areas of advertising, especially product endorsements, and cinema."

CAMO

Camo said he had received a call from the President's group offering him P500,000 for the right to use his composition as a campaign jingle.

"Writing songs is my only source of income," said Camo. "This is my chance to earn more. I don't see anything wrong in selling the song to the President. *Hindi naman masamang tao ang kukuha ng kanta.*"

He said that as of Friday, the network has not yet given him any word on its decision.

INQUIRER Entertainment learned from a source that ABS-CBN would match the offer made by the President's group.

According to ABS-CBN public relations director Leah Salterio, the song has become identified with the network, which is now using it as one of the theme songs of its show "Masayang Tanghali Bayan" and of its station ID.

Salterio said a movie "Otso-otso, The Movie" would be released by the network's Star Cinema in March. It will star comedians Vhong Navarro and Bayani Agbayani, the original singer of the hit song, and will be directed by Jerry Sineneng.

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel "Migs" Zubiri had suggested the use of "Otso-otso" as the President's campaign jingle. Zubiri said "Team Gloria," the youth movement formed for the President's campaign, plans to change the song's chorus from the original "*tayo'y mag-otso otso, otso-otso, otso-otso na*," to "*tayo'y mag-*PGMA, PGMA, PGMA na."

PGMA stands for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Otso-otso" was released in the last quarter of 2003. Salterio said the single turned gold (meaning, 15,000 copies sold) last month and is nearing the platinum mark (30,000 copies).

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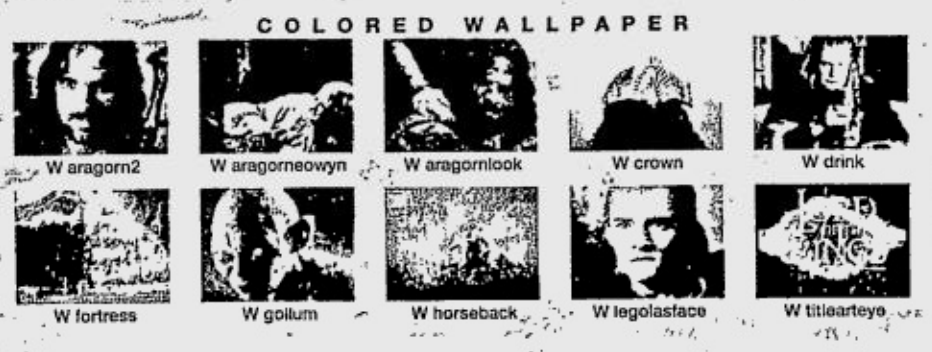

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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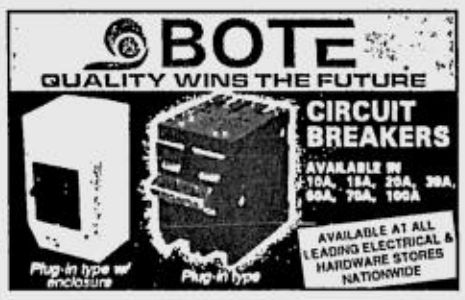
Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino



Of stable monetary policies, keeping fit, bank mergers

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

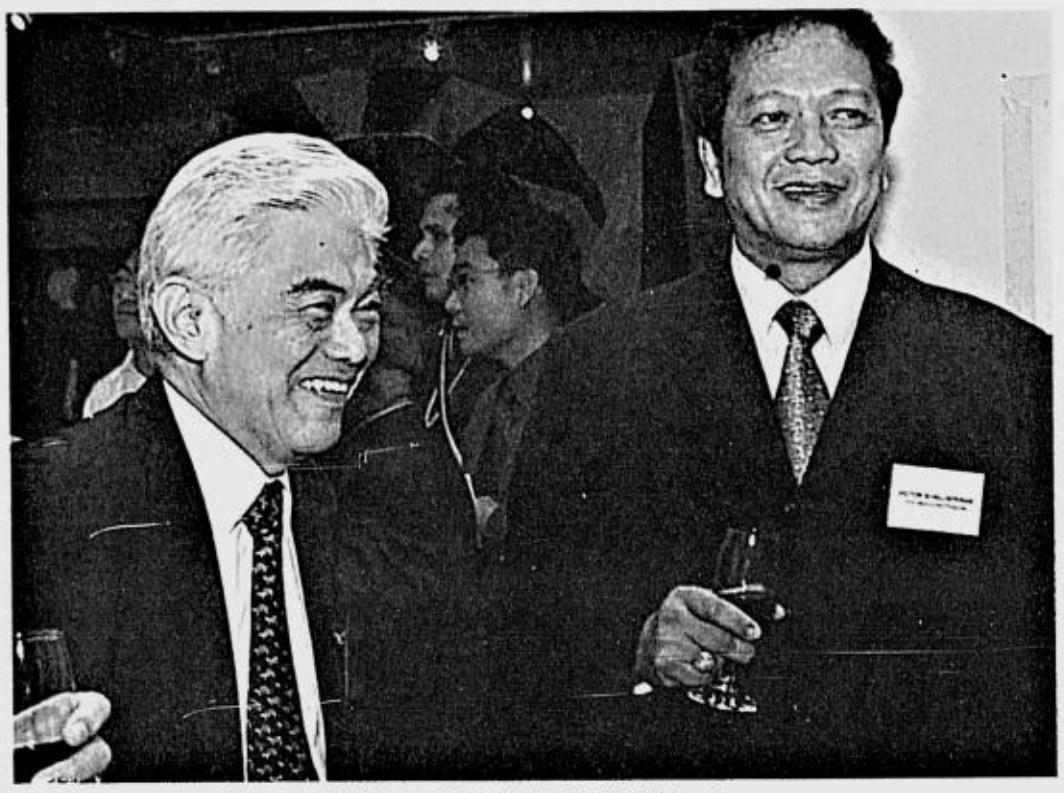
BY 6:30 p.m., the lobby of the Metropolitan Museum was filled with bankers. As usual, many stayed until the food ran out. Catering was done by Via Mare at almost P650 per head.

The reporters' most awaited guest was Banco de Oro chair Teresita T. Sy-Coson. Journalists crowded around her asking if they will merge BDO with Equitable PCIBank.

The business community was caught by surprise when the group reported that they had acquired the 29-percent stake of the Social Security System in Equitable PCIBank.

Tessie, the eldest daughter of taipan Henry Sy, graciously answered the questions until all the journalists were satisfied.

Of course by the time she reached the buffet table there was no more food left except for the vegetable sticks and grilled pan de sal with Laguna cheese.



METROBANK'S vice chair Placido Mapa with Unionbank's Vic Valdepeñas PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

She happily munched on the carrot sticks stating, "I take every opportunity to eat healthy."

Equitable PCIB chair Antonio Go was more evasive although he stayed a while and hobnobbed with the other bankers.

Equitable PCIB president Rene Buenaventura looked happy that night, appearing not at all perturbed by talks that his bank might merge with another.

It was only in the latter part of the '90s that Equitable merged with PCIBank.

BSP Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura looked more relax and declared that despite an election year, "BSP will continue its mandate of maintaining price stability and keep the banking system stable."

"We expect the monetary politicies to stay neutral," he added.

A handful of bankers appeared to have been able to keep the healthy lifestyle they adopted a couple of years ago notably Metrobank president Antonio S. Abacan and Chinatrust (Phils.) president Joey A. Bermudez.

TWO former financed chiefs: Jose T. Pardo and Jesus P. Estanislao

BSP Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura assures bankers they will maintain price stability amid an election year.

CHINATRUST president Joey Bermudez looks trim.

JOURNALISTS' most awaited guest Teresita T. Sy, chair of Banco de Oro.

RCBC chair Rizalino S. Navarro dismissed the numerous resignations of top officials from the bank saying its part of normal business. But he tells people to watch out for an announcement.

UNIONBANK's Justo Ortiz

Sisters create own line amid flood of imported garments in the market

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

MANGALDAN, Pangasinan—Call it "Sisters' Act," if you may please.

Young entrepreneurs Cherry and sister Claire Peña are determined to penetrate the country's garments industry through sheer determination and belief in Pinoy craftsmanship.

"We're just starting out so we're smaller than SMEs (small and medium enterprises)," says Cherry, 29, of her venture with 27-year-old sister Claire—a brand of apparel and scents they call "Claire."

Cherry and Claire, both working as statisticians, are determined to carve a niche for their line of clothes in a market flooded with imported garments and branded RTWs (ready to wear items).

Cherry said it was precisely because of the presence of "low quality" imported clothes and "good quality but expensive" attires in the local market that they were encouraged to enter the garments industry.

"Whenever I buy an imported blouse from China, I usually bump into another girl wearing similar clothes. Besides, the fabrics used are not good and the craftsmanship is poor. Branded clothes, on the other hand, are very expensive for teenage girls and those who are starting out in their careers," she says.

She says "Claire" aims to capture the market of young women, between 18 and 28 years, who are "looking for fun and individuality in their lifestyle."

Cherry says they produce a limited number of blouses for every design but maintain their products' affordability.

"The designs are very wearable and not flashy," she says. The samples show the sisters are partial to pastel, although some blouses come in black.

PINOY ENTREPRENEUR

Colognes, sanitizers

The Peñas tested their hands in business through the marketing of colognes and hand sanitizers in August last year.

"(These) were received well by our first customers," Cherry says.

She adds that she surfed the Internet to look for recipes for scents and came out with "Serenity," "Alive" and "Sweet Temptation" scents that are sold at P110 per 100-ml bottle.

The hand gel sanitizers have two versions—"Summer Breeze" and "Sweet Temptation"—and are sold at P50 per 100-ml bottle.

Because of the "positive response" that the colognes and hand gels generated, the Peñas thought it was time to expand into apparels in November.

After all, the two career women and their youngest sister Catherine, who is still in college, "like to wear nice clothes."

It is Claire, an employee of a softdrink company, who designs the clothes. Cherry, on the other hand, does the "legwork"—searching for raw materials in Divisoria, bringing the design to the pattern maker, bringing the pattern to the sub-contractor and overseeing the marketing aspect.

While doing all these, Cherry manages to do consultancy work as a statistician.

SISTERS/ B2

SISTER ACT. Cherry and Claire Peña wearing their creations PHOTOS BY RAY B. ZAMBRANO

"THE CONQUEROR" billboard that starred John Wayne. After the Liberation, the Bichara Theater employed all the fanfare of the opening of new films like a parade around town with a float of the mural of the film stars.

Bicol's movie house pioneer sees sure decline of industry

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Southern Luzon Bureau

NAGA CITY—Talk about movie houses in two Camarines provinces and Albay, Bicol and a Lebanese-Palestinian clan—the Bicharas—would come up in the conversation.

No other family in the region can match the Bicharas when it comes to the number of movie houses they operate in the three biggest provinces in Bicol.

The chain of Bichara movie houses has been literally built from the ruins of the original movie house burned during World War II (WWII).

Benjamin Bichara, one of today's key decision-makers in the family enterprise, looks back at the time when they salvaged reusable materials from the gutted ruins of their first movie house built in the pre-war era.

Until now, he could not find any explanation why the guerillas had to burn it down along with two other movie houses in this city.

It happened on May 2, 1942 amid confusion and panic, when the Japanese Occupation forces entered the city. The confusion and panic subsided only after several days.

The parents were wary and hesitant but Benjamin's older brothers Jaime and Alfonso (father of Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara and Maribeth Bichara of the movie industry) were persistent to revive their movie house business during the war.

One competitor

Before they could rebuild their gutted movie house, somebody opened one as the demand for entertainment surfaced. But after the Liberation, the owner of the movie house closed it down. The Bicharas possessed it.

From Liberation to the present, many more entrepreneurs tried to compete with the Bicharas wherever they opened movie houses. But

BICOL'S/ B2

Key RP hotel destinations experience robust growth

PROVINCIAL key cities in the Philippines like Davao, Cebu, Subic, Palawan, Tagaytay and Batangas are tourism treasures that contribute to the growth of the travel industry.

This is encouraging news, given the many challenges—ranging from SARS to the economic recession, peace and order situation and other disasters—that have put the tourism trade to its severest test.

Closely intertwined with what many people now regard as value-for-money destinations is the hotel business.

Varied attractions in each favored destination contribute to the brisk business for most of the hotels in the same locality.

In recent years, travel accommodations that include resort-hotels and international hotel chains have established a strong presence all over the country.

Some of these first-rate hotels in large urban centers and island getaways will be showcased at the Philippine Travel Agencies Association's TravelTour Expo 2004 set for Feb. 6-8 at Megatrade Halls 1&2, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

TravelTour Expo participants Barcelo Hotels and Resorts, Marco Polo Hotel Group, Marriott Hotels International, Matabungkay Beach Resort and Hotel and Subic International Hotel, said that hotels have been holding up well despite the crises.

Hotel executives are bullish about 2004, especially as the hotels' meeting and convention services products are increasingly being sought by both local and foreign business travelers.

"We've been through a lot of crises already, and the Philippine market has shown resiliency," said Marco Polo Hotel Group Regional Sales Manager Undine Homena.

Marco Polo is a leading hotel brand in the Asia-Pacific region catering to an upmarket clientele.

Barcelo Hotels and Resorts, on the other hand, takes pride in elevating hotel services and facilities to international standards.

Barcelo Hotels started establishing a strong foothold in Asia in 2000 when it put up a hotel in Shanghai. It moved its regional headquarters from Shanghai to Manila in May 2001.

These include the Barcelo Eagle Point Resort in Batangas, Barcelo Pearl Farm Island Resort in Samal Island, Barcelo Asturias Hotel in Puerto Princesa and Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center in Iloilo. Soon to be added to the list is the Taal Vista hotel.

The Matabungkay Beach Resort and Hotel in Lian, Batangas is another popular stopover point to the major diving spot in Nasugbu. It is an example of a resort hotel which has embarked on aggressive marketing efforts to ensure returning guests.

Matabungkay Beach Resort and Hotel Marketing Administrative Manager Klarissa Bautista said the company posted an average 30 percent increase in occupancy in 2003 vis-a-vis the previous year, and experienced a large influx of local tourists despite the decline in foreign visitors created by SARS.

These and other hotels are gearing for even more exciting prospects this year through their participation in the PTAA's annual travel show, the largest consumer marketplace for travel.

(For more information, contact the PTAA at 552-0026 to 29)

Sisters create own line . . .

From page B1

The "Claire" apparel and scents are sold by dealers through direct selling. Most of their dealers are college students who want to earn extra income, Cherry says.

Each garment has a fixed price and dealers earn through commissions.

"We sell through consignment. This way, the dealers can earn without putting in capital. After 15 days, we retrieve unsold items and give them to other dealers," Cherry says.

The "Claire" blouses are also sold at DresKode, a store at the Greenbelt shopping mall in Makati City.

Cherry says eight blouses, the first batch that they produced, were sold two days after she brought them to DresKode last year.

She adds that in November and December alone, she sold some 200 blouses, "which is not bad for a start."

Business streak

Because of the encouraging sales, she and her sister have "high hopes" for their brand and plan to include handbags to their product line this year. Claire will design the handbags while Cherry said she will look for a craftsman or a shoemaker in Marikina City to execute their designs.

The Peñas are also planning to print a catalogue of "Claire" products for their dealers and clients.

But why are the sisters, both graduates of the University of the Philippines, and who can make good money in their line of work, venturing into business during these uncertain times?

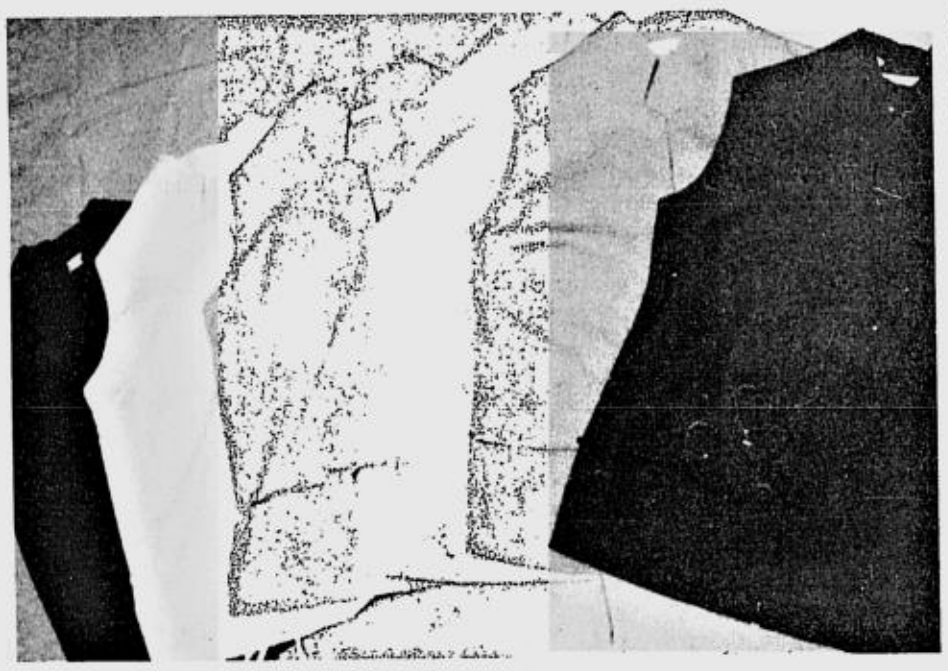
Cherry, who has a master's degree in Business from the Asian Institute of Management, says it was good to be entrepreneurs even on a small scale while one is employed.

"Business has a multiplier effect. You give opportunities for others to earn, too, like subcontractors, who are happy to have work, especially during lean months. We, likewise, give our dealers (most of them students) an opportunity to earn," she says.

Cherry says she and her sisters have a "business streak" in them. Even as young girls, they would sell banana cue, boiled corn and stickers in school.

"We were always talking about business ideas and since we like clothes, scents and bags, we thought it would be best to go into a business that we know best," she says.

For those interested to be dealers of "Claire" products, Cherry Peña can be reached through her mobile phone number 0917-409-0432.



BLOUSES products of CLAIRE

Michael Jordan's briefs brand moves to tap four types of men

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

WITH basketball star Michael Jordan as endorser, Hanes has become a household name worldwide.

But after focusing its brand building efforts in the US and Europe, Sara Lee, the largest apparel brand in the world and mother company of Hanes casual wear and under garments, is now setting its sightson Asia, which it acknowledges as the growth market.

Sara Lee is adopting a two-pronged approach in the region to expand its market for male intimates, and the Philippines finds itself as the take-off point.

The move was made to address the issue that Hanes, albeit a household brand, is popular with the older guys, while the younger ones prefer other brands, at least in the Philippines.

Realizing that the country is a relatively young market, Sara Lee is targeting to expand its market.

"Sara Lee earlier sent a team to develop Asia but nothing came out of it and it focused its expansion on the US. Today, they recognize that the growth is in Asia," says Sara lee Philippines Inc. marketing manager Mari J. Litonjua.

Seeing the big demand for intimate apparel for men in the Philippines, which averages P1.6 billion a year, Hanes decided to launch its new global look in Asia in the Philippines. The relaunch is intended to tap a broader segment for its underwear line by creating four lines that aim to tab a broader market.

Litonjua admits that Hanes is popular among the mature market in the Philippines. And, unlike in the US, where the products are found in value shops, like Walmart and K-mart, Hanes in Asia is regarded as a premium brand and is priced higher than local brands like Bench.

For the relaunch this month, Hanes unveils four new lines that aims to target males from the A to C market aged 18 to 54. The four are premium, smart, sports and designer.

THE FAMOUS basketball player's face looms over the display racks.

"The aim is not only to tap the different lifestyles of men, " says Litonjua.

On top of this, Audie Aran, senior brand manager for Hanes, explains the brand has adopted the new tagline, "Love Hanes on me" which aims to tap into the emotional perceptions of the target consumers.

"The objective is you look great, you feel great," she says.

AUDIE Aran and Mari Litonjua

Hanes is also set to open its first stand alone store by the first quarter of this year in Glorietta. This will be the first in Asia. Bench was the first local brand to put up an exclusive store for its underclothes and the move has proved successful.

If successful, other free standing stores will be set up in Thailand, Malaysia, Korea and Indonesia.

Litonjua says getting out of the department store will create better awareness of the products.

He admits that Hanes is one of the most "imitated" undergarment brands. The firm has conducted several raids in Baclaran and Divisoria and confiscated fake Hanes products.

Sara Lee hopes to further reduce imitations. It recently launched underclothes and shirts with no irritating labels. Instead, the brand is heat sealed into the garments.

Sara Lee is optimistic about the Philippine market. Litonjua says the group eyes a 40-percent market share in the next three years.

Bicol's movie house pioneer sees sure decline ...

From page B1

no one has yet made a dent on the clan's dominance in the movie house business in Bicol.

The first movie house the Bicharas put up in Naga City (still a town that time until its foundation as chartered city on June 18, 1948) was built sometime in 1923 when the most technologically advanced entertainment was the silent movie.

It opened six years prior to the Wall St. crash on Oct. 24, 1929, the Black Thursday, in the history of world economy, which ushered the Great Depression era.

Bichara clan's first movie house introduced in this former Camarines town the silent movie stars from Hollywood like Rudolf Valentino and Charlie Chaplin.

The popularity of the movies in the heydays of the industry paved the way for the expansion of the movie house business. First, the Bichara clan bought out one competitor's movie house.

Then, they decided to go further to Iriga City, some 60 kilometers from Naga City, and operated another additional movie house outside of this city.

Great Depression

When the Great Depression hit the US, the Philippine economy was deeply scathed. The operation of the movie house, general merchandise store and commercial spaces suffered a downturn that placed the burden on the overall business situation of the Bichara clan.

Just before the WWII broke out, the Bicharas rented the general merchandise store to a Japanese entrepreneur who turned it into a bazaar. During the Japanese Occupation, from 1943 to 1945, the movie house business of the Bichara clan thrived, even as the rebuilt movie house from the salvaged materials of the gutted original movie house had only been decent enough to provide their patrons with benches for seats, burnt GI sheets for its roof and nipa shingles for walls.

On a leased rice mill generator, the shows went on and they were patronized even as they were the last to enter the business.

Two other competing movie houses had been operating for almost a year Naga at that time.

But Benjamin says the war seemed to have actually increased people's craving for entertainment, so that the inferiority of the facilities and structural limitations of their movie house did not turn off patrons, even if the two other movie houses had better facilities.

Alfonso, a risk taker expanded to several towns in Camarines Sur and then penetrated the provinces of Albay and Camarines Norte. The Bichara clan pursued relentlessly to be on top of the players in the movie house business after the Liberation. One of the Bichara brothers decided to specialize in film bookings that gave them edge over competitors.

Origin

The Bichara clan originated from two Middle East nationals, Victor and Emily, who met here in the 1900s. The couple came to the Philippines because of different circumstances.

Victor came to Naga City from Maaser II Chouf, Lebanon on invitation of his brother, Miguel, who came to the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century.

The latter made good as an entrepreneur with businesses in the cities of Naga and Iriga.

In 1906, Victor came with his younger brother Juan. The Bichara brothers built their families in Naga City.

Emily came from the Panayotti family. They were wealthy Palestinians who entered the Philippines in 1902 through a port in Sorsogon. The Panayotti family decided to travel to the Philippines after the United States Government took control of their property in Colorado.

EL CID Film Billboard. The old Bichara Theater in the 1960s during the showing of "El Cid" that starred Charleston Heston and Sofia Loren. PHOTO BY BICHARA

Declining industry

Benjamin could only relish in his memories the most lucrative years of the movie house business when box-office Tagalog films were mostly standing-room-only on opening days.

He notes that during the "bomba" era and even the "pene movies" in the 1980s, their movie houses were always full with adult moviegoers. But the movie house business is now losing steam and movie sales have been reversed.

He believes that the death knell of the movie house business is in the streets where stores and peddlers of pirated VCDs openly trade at an outrageous price of a hundred bucks for three different copies.

An original copy of "Ang Kilabot at Kembot" is sold at P450 while pirated ones, at P35 a piece in the streets.

In the stalls where the Naga City government rents to transient merchants, all the VCDs sold are pirated. No stall sells original VCDs, whether audio or video compact discs.

Benjamin says the advent of quickie bold films today did not make any difference and movie sales continue to decline. He says some pirated VCDs show graphic sexual acts cut in the movies.

"The people who like sex movies would just buy the pirated ones of course and watch them in the comfort of their homes than go to a movie house and wait for nothing," he quips.

Benjamin says another most serious threat to the movie house business in Bicol and anywhere else in the country is the advent of cable television that provides full-length movies, specialized channels and many other channels with special programs.

He feels that the amusement tax that reaches 15 percent of the gross sales is a disincentive and the 65 percent of the net sales that goes to the movie companies constrict profits as the sales decline.

From the 1990s to the present, the Bichara clan was forced to close down three movie houses and a twin cinema.

They converted them into air-conditioned commercial spaces that they leased out. At the end of this year, they are planning to close down another movie house and convert it into another air-conditioned commercial building.

Benjamin is not upbeat with the future of their movie house business.

The consistency of the decline of movie sales is too evident to ignore. But they have found a way to continue with their family enterprise through the conversion of their properties into commercial uses.

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7 CRYING LADIES
8 MALIKMATA

SM CITY PAMPANGA 7128015
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES
5 FANTASTIC MAN
6 BRIDAL SHOWER

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT 8284873
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 GAGAMBOY

SM BICUTAN 7743055
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM CITY MARILAO
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM STA. MESA 7140322 • 7140416
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CAPTAIN BARBELL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 FILIPINAS
5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
6 MALIKMATA
7 CRYING LADIES
8 THE GRUDGE
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MANO PO 2

SM SOUTHMALL 8668788
1 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
2 CRYING LADIES
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 THE GATHERING
5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
6 MANO PO 2
7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 MALIKMATA
10 BRIDAL SHOWER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9358749
1 MANO PO 2
2 GAGAMBOY
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
6 FANTASTICMAN
7 CRYING LADIES
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MALIKMATA
11 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
12 FILIPINAS

SM CITY DAVAO 2310958
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 MANO PO 2
4 CRYING LADIES
5 BRIDAL SHOWER
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7108977-80
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MALIKMATA
3 FILIPINAS
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM MEGAMALL 6321001 • 6328401
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6346400
2 THE GATHERING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
6 MALIKMATA
7 GAGAMBOY
8 MANO PO 2
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
11 CRYING LADIES
12 FILIPINAS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2914322
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MALIKMATA
3 FILIPINAS
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

SM CITY ILOILO 3391422
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 RESERVED
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 CRYING LADIES
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 RESERVED
8 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MANILA 5391240
1 THE GATHERING
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 MANO PO 2
8 MALIKMATA
9 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
10 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
11 FANTASTICMAN
12 GAGAMBOY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8582894
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MANO PO 2
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 4434585
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MALIKMATA
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City • 638 9781 - 85

1 LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING
11:00 FS/11:30 MF/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/2:20 END

2 LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING
10:20 FS/10:50 MF/2:40/6:30/9:50 LFS/10:20 LMF/1:40 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8975 • LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
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2 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 1:30, 5:40, 9:30
3 BUFFALO SOLDIER 12:05, 2:15, 4:30, 6:40, 9:00
4 THE GATHERING 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
5 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 10:15, 2:10, 6:05, 10:00
6 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 1:00, 5:00, 9:00, 12:20
7 FILIPINAS 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 CRYING LADIES 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
9 BRIDAL SHOWER 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
10 MANO PO 2 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50

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Ermita
526-7185
536-7809 to 12

1 LOTR3 - 10:40, 2:20, 6:00, 10:00
2 CRYING LADIES - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
3 MALIKMATA - 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:50
4 THE GATHERING - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00
6 BRIDAL SHOWER - 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10.00
7 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00

Metro East
Marcos hway
682-6193/09
682-8280

1 MALIKMATA
2 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 CRYING LADIES
6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
7 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
8 MANO PO 2

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
2 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPTAIN BARBELL
6 FILIPINAS
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 MANO PO 2

Cainta
Brgy Sto Domingo Ortigas Extension
240-4461

1 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Malabon
288-0985/2575

1 CRYING LADIES
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Sta. Rosa
(049)837-0987

LOTR3 1
MANO PO 2 2
MALIKMATA 3
BRIDAL SHOWER 4
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 5

Lipa, Batangas
(043)757-3664/312-5879

CRYING LADIES
HOMECOMING
GAGAMBOY
BRIDAL SHOWER
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

Dasmariñas
(046)8522125

LOTR3 1
CRYING LADIES 2
BRIDAL SHOWER 3
CAPTAIN BARBELL 4
FILIPINAS 5

Imus
(046)471-6188 / 875-5858

LOTR3
LOTR3
THE GRUDGE
BRIDAL SHOWER
MALIKMATA
CAPTAIN BARBELL

Bacolod
(034)441-0458-59

LOTR3 1
LOTR3 2
JEEPERS CREEPERS 3
THE GRUDGE 4
CRYING LADIES 5
OUT OF TIME 6

Iloilo
(033)336-8070 to 78

LOTR3
JEEPERS CREEPERS
CRYING LADIES
LOTR3
FILIPINAS
BRIDAL SHOWER

Star Mills
San Fernando Pampanga
(045)875-1927
(045)961-5270

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 FILIPINAS
3 CRYING LADIES
4 MANO PO 2
5 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

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LOTR: Return of the King

Projected to gross over 1Billion dollars worldwide. Only TITANIC achieved this figure six years ago.

Variety.com- January 2004 Monthly Edition

Sam confronts Gollum.

LORD OF THE RINGS tied the record of Spiderman as the fastest film to reach $300m in the US boxoffice. New Line Cinema is expecting the film to gross over 1 billion dollars worldwide. The second film to achieve this after Titanic.

The final installment of the The Lord of the Rings film trilogy sold $400 worth of tickets outside of the US in just 15 days, the highest total takings of any film.

The strong box office performance of The Return of the King provides a welcome boost for Time Warner, the media conglomerate that owns New Line Cinema, the film's distributor, and raises hopes that it will become only the second film after Titanic to gross more than $1bn during its run.

Time Warner has been overshadowed by record writedowns, management upheaval and stock price turmoil since it merged four years ago with AOL, the internet service provider.

The Return of the King dominated North America box offices for three weekends, selling $300m worth of tickets in 17 days, the total takings easily surpass every major openings in Hollywood history.

The financial performance of The Return of the King is all the more remarkable because the film has yet to open in a number of huge countries, including Japan, Italy and Australia.

The first Lord of the Rings installment, The Fellowship of the Ring, released in 2001, achieved North American ticket sales of $94m in its first five days and went on to gross $861m worldwide. The Two Towers, released in 2002, grossed $102m in its first five days in North America and went on to achieve total sales of $921m.

Each of the films, shot on location in New Zealand by director Peter Jackson, is estimated to have cost $150m to $200m to produce.

Titanic, released in 1998, launched in fewer countries but went on to achieve worldwide ticket sales of $1.8bn.

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This movie contains scary scenes that may not be suitable for very young viewers. parental guidance is prenosed

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LOTR 3 - P13
11:20, 3:05, 6:50, 10:40
Advance Selling P150

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1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
2 BRIDAL SHOWER	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	M. BUTTERFLY Jan. 9, 10 & 11	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
4 CRYING LADIES	4 BUFFALO SOLDIER		4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
	5 THE GATHERING		5 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	5 BRIDAL SHOWER
	6 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			
	7 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			

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MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY - LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BRIDAL SHOWER
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	BRIDAL SHOWER
B	LORD OF THE RINGS
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MANO PO 2
CINEMA-2	MALIKMATA
CINEMA-3	FANTASTIC MAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CAPTAIN BARBELL
CINEMA-6	FILIPINAS
CINEMA-7	GAGAMBOY
CINEMA-8	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-12	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-14	CRYING LADIES
CINEMA-15	BRIDAL SHOWER

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 3
CINEMA-1	LORD OF THE RINGS 3
CINEMA-2	FILIPINAS
CINEMA-4	MALIKMATA

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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1 LORD OF THE RINGS	11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:45
2 LORD OF THE RINGS	12:15, 4:00, 7:45, 11:30
3 LORD OF THE RINGS	1:45, 5:30, 9:15, 12:35
4 LORD OF THE RINGS	10:45, 2:30, 6:15, 10:00

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Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 1:45, 5:30, 9:15	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 12:15, 4:00, 7:45	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 1:00, 4:45, 8:30
LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:45	BUFFALO SOLDIERS R13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 2:30, 6:15, 10:00

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5 BUFFALO SOLDIER
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
8 CRYING LADIES
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

Masagana CINEMA
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1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 CRYING LADIES

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www.clickthecity.com.ph
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(Makati City) tel 892.2503
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Centre Plaza Cinema
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2 CRYING LADYS

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2 MANO PO-2
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY

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Gotesco City
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5 GAGAMBOY
6 BRIDAL SHOWER
7 CRYING LADIES
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

Gotesco Grand Central
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1 MANO PO-2
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 MALIKMATA
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 GAGAMBOY
8 CRYING LADIES
9 CAPT. BARBEL

Gotesco Commonwealth
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1 GAGAMBOY
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 MANO PO-2

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2 CAPT. BARBEL
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4 MANO PO-2
5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 CRYING LADIES
6 MANO PO-2
7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
8
9

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
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2 CRYING LADIES
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CAPT. BARBEL

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 CRYING LADIES
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

Cine Nepo
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2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES

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2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 BRIDAL SHOWER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 MANO PO-2
4 FANTASTIC MAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
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1 GAGAMBOY
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 CRYING LADIES
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 MALIKMATA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel)
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 MALIKMATA
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
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2 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPT. BARBEL

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(Binan) tel (049) 511.8883
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2 CRYING LADIES

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES
3 MANO PO-2

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 MALIKMATA
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CAPT. BARBEL

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 FANTASTIC MAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 GAGAMBOY
3 HOME COMING
4 MALIKMATA

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2 MANO PO-2

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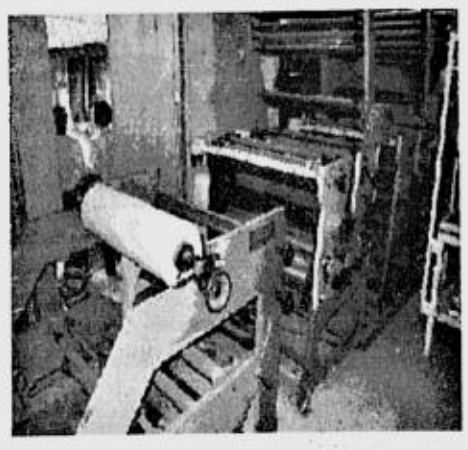

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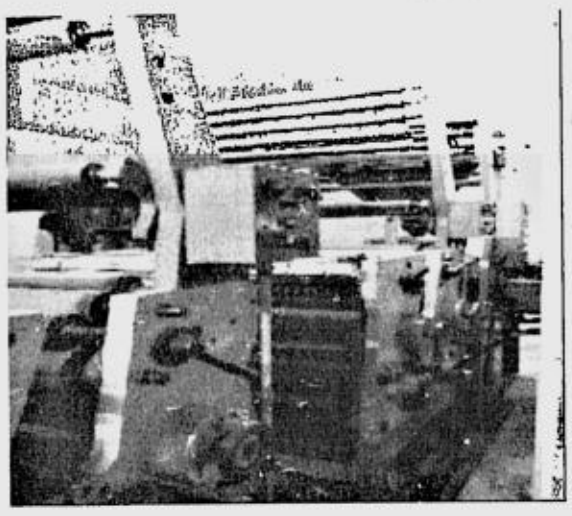
Brand : Powertron Brand
Color : Blue
Electricity : 3 phase, 60 htz



NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given to the public that the Agent's Temporary Receipts (ATRs) listed below were reported lost/could no longer be accounted for:

ATR SERIAL NO.:	ATR SERIAL NO.:	ATR SERIAL NO.:
040001 - 040050	340201 - 340250	336151 - 336200
335251 - 335300	340251 - 340300	336201 - 336250
340351 - 340400	340301 - 340350	340001 - 340050
335301 - 335350	462701 - 462750	340051 - 340100
335351 - 335400	462751 - 462800	340301 - 340350
335401 - 335450	462801 - 462850	335451 - 335500
335501 - 335550	462851 - 462900	723351 - 723400
335551 - 335600	462901 - 462950	723401 - 723450
335601 – 335650	722901 - 722950	723451 - 723500
335651 – 335700	722951 - 723000	723501 - 723550
335701 – 335750	723001 - 723050	723551 - 723600
335851 – 335900	723051 - 723100	848001 - 848050
335901 – 336050	723101 - 723150	848052 - 848100
335951 - 336050	723203 - 723250	848101 - 848150
336051 - 336100	723251 - 723300	340151 - 340200
336101 - 336151	723301 - 723350	340101 - 340150

Any transaction resulting from the issuance of the subject ATRs will not be honored by Philamlife after this publication.

PHILAM LIFE

PHILAMLIFE
United Nations Avenue, Ermita, Manila

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Bids and Awards Committee-I

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) invites interested Forwarding/Hauling Service Providers to submit quotation for the **FORWARDING/HAULING SERVICES** of supplies, printed materials and equipments of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Interested bidders may secure a complete set of bidding documents starting **January 13, 2004** at the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City with Telephone Numbers **951-7116.**

The Bidder shall submit, sealed in an envelope, one (1) original of the Technical Proposal and Price Proposal and clearly mark the envelope **"ORIGINAL - TECHNICAL AND PRICE PROPOSAL FOR THE FORWARDING/HAULING SERVICES"**. In addition, the Bidder shall submit one (1) copy of the Technical Proposal and Price Proposal and clearly mark them **"COPY - TECHNICAL & PRICE PROPOSAL FOR THE FORWARDING/HAULING SERVICES"**. In the event of any discrepancy between the original and the copies, the original shall prevail. Any interlineations, erasures or overwriting shall be valid only if they are signed or initiated by the person signing the Bid.

Both the Technical Proposal and Price Proposal shall be opened at the bid opening. No amendments or changes to the Technical and Price Proposals are permitted. Bids with Technical Proposals which do not conform to the specified requirements will be rejected as deficient Bids.

The Technical and Price Proposals are evaluated and the Contract is awarded to the Bidders whose Bid has been determined to be the lowest evaluated substantially responsive Bid.

Quotation must be received not later than January 28, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. at the ADB Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. Thereafter, quotation will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representative(s) who chooses to attend. Late quotations will not be accepted.

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary & Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee-I

(PDI - Jan 11 & 18 2004)

RMHS Class '65 alumni homecoming

THERE will be an alumni homecoming for Class 1965 of the Rosales National (formerly Municipal) High School, Rosales, Pangasinan on February 7 & 8, 2004. Venue: Day 1 – Rosales National HS/ Golden Flame & Banquet Hall. Day 2 – San Fabian PTA Beach Resort, San Fabian, Pangasinan (Whole Day).

For details, please contact: Antonia Ganzon Sarzate-09184451894; Mary Domingo Tulagan-09196037204; Norma Quiton Borlongan-09176050264; Teofilo "Bebot" Sanchez-09178356974 and Lilia Acosta Champee-0755823243.

THE BELLEVUE MANILA

The Bellevue Manila, the first and only full-service international standard deluxe hotel in the South of Metro Manila, with 222 deluxe rooms and suites, banquet facilities, Asian Specialty Restaurant, Entertainment Center, and Spa & Health Club, are inviting service-oriented young professionals for the following positions:

DIRECTOR OF SALES

Qualifications:
- *Preferably with a degree in Marketing or Hotel & Restaurant Management from a reputable school*
- *With at least (2) two years experience in managing a sales team of 10 staff and strong in sales administration and business development*
- *With excellent communication, leadership and managerial skills*
- *Aggressive, creative and has an astute sense of identifying market needs*

SR. CATERING MANAGER

Qualifications:
- *Preferably with a degree in Marketing or Hotel & Restaurant Management from a reputable school*
- *Experience in hotel sales or on luxury brands is a plus*
- *Articulate, resourceful and must possess a pleasing personality*
- *Customer focused, aggressive and competitive*

TRAINING OFFICER

Qualifications:
- *Certified Trainer of Train the Trainers Program and can design Training plans for all Departments*
- *Must possess a mature personality*
- *Excellent in oral & written communications*
- *Preferably two (2) years experience in handling all aspects of training and development of employees in a hotel or same industry*

BANQUET CHEF/SOUS CHEF

Qualifications:
- *Experience in a 4 or 5 Star international hotel, here or abroad*
- *Managed a banquet brigade of at least 15 staff*
- *Knowledge in Western Cuisine*
- *Salary commensurate to experience*

BAR MANAGER

Qualifications:
- *Preferably a graduate of Hotel & Restaurant Management*
- *Experience in handling a bar preferably in a 4 to 5 star hotel with a minimum of 15 staff*
- *Equipped with an ability to execute a Food & Beverage Plan and quality levels of products and services*
- *With excellent communication, leadership and managerial skills*

Interested applicants should be creative, highly motivated, posses a strong drive and are team players.

Please send your resume together with your recent 2x2 photo to:
The Human Resources Department, The Bellevue Manila
North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone
Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City 1781
Telephone No: 771 8181 / Fax No: 771 8282
e-mail address: tbmnl@thebellevue.com.ph
Only qualified applicants will be called for interview.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be informed that **Mr. ANTONIO "TONEE" B. STA. MARIA III** whose picture appears above is no longer connected with **Sulpicio Lines, Inc.** He left the company last November 5, 2003 without prior clearance and was eventually terminated with the cause effective December 23, 2003. The public is hereby warned that any and all transactions entered with by **Mr. Antonio B. Sta. Maria III** on behalf of **Sulpicio Lines, Inc.** shall not be honored by the company.

(PDI – January 11, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

ROSARIO DELA ROSA CALINGASAN — **DAISY SANTERO PAPASIN**

Please be informed that Ms. Rosario dela Rosa Calingasan and Ms. Daisy Santero Papasin, whose pictures appear above with last known address at 108 Del Rosario St., Pilar, Bataan, and Talisay, Balanga, Bataan are wanted for **QUALIFIED THEFT** and have standing Warrant of Arrests issued by Regional Trial Court of Makati Branch 63 in connection with Criminal case No. 03-298 to 03-303 respectively.

A substantial amount will be given to anyone who can provide us information that will lead to their arrest. Informant(s) identity shall be held confidential. Pls. Contact the following telephone numbers (02) 852-0972 to 73. A Hold Departure Order was issued by the Honorable Court, Br. 63 RTC, Makati.

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A: FOR POWER PLANT MAINTENANCE JOB
MINIMUM 5 YEARS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
- MECHANICAL ENGINEERS – BSME, Exp in Steam Power plants over 250MW cap.
- MECHANICAL ENGINEERS – BSME Exp in Gas Power plants over 50MW cap.
- ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS – BSEE,Exp in Steam Power plants over 250MW cap
- ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS – BSEE, Expn Gas Power plants over 50MW capacity
- INSTRUMENT ENGINEERS – Exp in Steam & Gas Power plants of high capacity
- METALLURGICAL ENGINEERS – Exp in Steam&Gas power Plants of high cap
- PROTECTION ENGINEERS – Expin Steam & Gas Power plants of high cap
- CHEMICAL ENGINEERS – Exp in Steam & Gas Power plants of high capacity
- CONTROL ROOM SUPERVISORS
- STEAM TURBINE OPERATORS
- ELECTRICAL OPERATORS
- WATER TREATMENT OPERATORS
- FUEL OPERATORS
- SHIFT CHEMISTS
- MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE FOREMEN
- ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE FOREMEN
- INSTRUM & CONTROL MAINTENANCE FOREMEN
- MAINT. PLANNING & PROGRAMMING FOREMEN
- MATERIAL FOREMEN
- EFFICIENCY & PERFORMANCE FOREMEN
- TURBINE MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS
- BOILER MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS
- MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS

[For technicians categories must have an experience in Steam Power Plants over 250MW capacity & with three years Diploma in specific fields,able to speak and write English]

B: FOR HEAD OFFICE VACANCIES
- PLANNING ENGRS-Mechl(Construction Planners) BSME 5 to 8yrs exp in Constructions petrochem or offshore incl in planning & scheduling knowledge in Primavera V3.2
- SENIOR ESTIMATORS, ELECTRICAL&INSTRUM. BS EE Instrument licensed Minimum 8 years experience Must be familiar with Aramco, Sabic, Royal Commission construction standards Must be able to develop standard composite activities to arrive at a unit price.
- MECHANICAL ESTIMATORS – BSME licensed. Min 5 yrs experience in constructioneng-neering plus 4 yrs exp in preparation of estimates for construction.
- ASST. ESTIMATING PROCESSOR – Commerce or Business Management graduate Minimum 4 years experience in preparation of tender submittals and control of documents Very computer literate in Microsoft office
- SENIOR DESIGN ENGINEERS, ELECTRICAL
- DESIGN ENGINEERS, CIVIL / STRUCTURAL
- CAD DESIGNER / DRAFTSMEN – CIVIL /STRUC.
- CAD DESIGNER / DRAFTSMEN – INSTRUMENT
- FIRE ENGINEERS – 10 years experience in Fire Dept. with BS degree.
- SAFETY TRAINING SPECIALISTS – 10 years exp BS Eng.g
- HUMAN RESOURCE – Must have a very good exposure in Human Resources & English literature
- SECRETARIES / EDP CLERKS – College graduate , Computer literate

C: OTHER PROJECTS
- PIPING ENGINEERS – BSME Min 5 years exp
- MAINTENANCE SUPERVISORS (MECHANICAL)- With experience in trouble shooting and excellent supervisory and communication skills in maintenance of rotary equipments like steam turbine, centrifugal and reciprocating compressor,multistage vertical and horizontal pumps and gear boxes Must be fluent in English.
- MAINTENANCE MILLWRIGHTS – Minimum 5 years experience in Refinery or Petrochemical plant maintenance works Experience in overhauling of rotating equipments,reading drawings and instructions to install / remove rotating equipt or parts, to set, align & test run,trouble shoot rotating equipments like pumps compressors steam turbine etc Knowledge of English language.
- MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIANS - Minimum 5 years experience in Refinery or Petrochemical plant maintenance works Able to trouble shoot ground faults, electrical motors, power distribution systems, circuit breakers, high voltage rectifiers, transformers EOT Crane Cathodic protection Knowledge of English language

Interested applicants may report for personal interview with the following:
Original and two sets copies of detailed resume, employment certificates, diplomas, PRC Certificate / ID if available, training / seminars certificate, valid passport, driving license if available and two pcs 2 x 2 colored photograph to

AERO ALLIED INTERNATIONAL, INC.
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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that MULTI-ORIENT MANPOWER & MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC. is applying for a landbased license with the PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION (POEA) with the following incorporators/officers:

FRED B. STA. RITA	– President (Inc./Dir)
ANTONIO S. VIRAY	– Vice President (Inc./Dir)
FLORA P. OCAMPO	– Chief Executive Officer
MILAGROS B. SANICO	– Corp. Sec./Treasurer (Inc./Dir)
CONSTANCIO CALOMOT	– Chief Doc. Officer (Inc./Dir)
NICOLAS T. GERONIMO	– Incorporator (Director)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2004

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RESIDENTIAL

QUEZON CITY	MIN BID
1 2 Sty Res'l Townhse / Lot-1-A Unit-B Agnes St, Ideal Subd, Commonwealth LA-80 / FA-145	1,849,000
2 3 Sty Res'l Townhse / # 65-D Mapang-akit St, Pinahan, LA - 61 / F A - 139	2,151,000
3 3 Sty T'hse / L1-A Alibangbang cor Bakawan Sts, Veterans Vill,Proj-7/ LA-53 10/FA-166 50	2,155,000
4 Resl Apt-10 Dr, 2-Sty / Castro Compound, Sta Lucia, Novaliches LA-250 / FA-369	2,248,000
5 T'hse-/ Unit-A-2 Baler Luxury, T'hms, Baler cor J Luna Sts SFDM L A -163 / F A -244	3,133,000
6 4 Sty H&L / # 394-A Sangandaan N'liches LA-218 / FA-721	4,100,000

CALOOCAN CITY	MIN BID
7 Res'l lot / Lot-5 Blk-5, Myrna Subd Brgy Llano/Nat LA- 1,398	1,804,000

PARANAQUE CITY	MIN BID
8 Condo / U-21-D Cluveland Twr Asiaworld City / FA-363 94	9,401,000

MAKATI (Kingswood Condo.)	MIN BID
9 Penthse/Unit P2F,Twr-B, 28' & 29' flr, V Cruz Ext'n / FA-154	7,207,200
10 Penthse/Unit P3F,Twr-B, 26' & 27' flr, V Cruz Ext'n / FA-154	7,207,200

PASIG (ORTIGAS CENTER)	MIN BID
11 Condo / Unit - 2802, AIC Gold Twr, Emerald Ave / FA-167 17	6,900,000

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL	MIN BID
12 Lot-20 Blk -17, Jerusalem St Palmera Hills-5, Lilian /LA-120	399,000
13 Lot-79 Blk.-38, Forest Hills Subd, Brgy San Isidro /LA-523	1,200,000
14 Lot / L-47 B-18 Park Ridge Est -3 (via Valley Golf) LA-811	2,056,000

Cottonwoods Hts., Bayugo, Antipolo	
15 Lot/L-6 B2 Cascades / LA-246	1,034,000
16 Lot / L-21 Blk-2 / LA – 355	1,641,000

TAYTAY, RIZAL	MIN BID
17 2 Sty Bldg / Lot 22 & 24, B-2, Rd lot-4, Ciudad Del Sol-2, Sta Ana LA-137 50 / FA-65	732,000
18 2 Sty Res'l / Lot-1 Melon cor Guava Sts , Dividend Homes San Juan LA-185 / FA- 333	1,925,000

CAVITE (Springville Subd, Molino)	MIN BID
19 L-10-B B-2, Rimas St , West Phase – 1 / L A – 71	291,000
20 L-20-A B-2, Rimas St / L A - 75	308,000
21 L-4 B-2, Chico St , West Phase – 2 / L A - 75	308,000
22 L24 B-13 Agoho St , Central Phase – 2 / L A – 70	319,000
23 L-26-A B-2, Rimas St / LA-79	324,000
24 L-28-B B-2, Rimas St / LA-80	328,000
25 L-11-A B-22, Dayap St , West Phase – 2 / L A - 80	328,000
26 L-3-B B-10, Pina St , West Phase – 1 / L A - 85	348,000
27 L-20-B B-2, Rimas St /LA-106	435,000
28 L-11-B B-22, Dayap St , West Phase – 2 / L A - 120	492,000
29 L-3 B-2, Chico St , West Phase – 2 / L A - 183	750,000
30 L-8 B-12, (near Agoho St), Central Phase-2 / L A – 180	820,000

CAVITE	MIN BID
31 H&L / L-13 Blk -43, City Hms Resortville, Brgy. Lancaan, Dasmarinas LA- 35 / FA- 25	193,000
32 1 Sty H&L / L-10 B-60, Alley - 26, City Homes, Phase – 4, Sampaloc, Burol LA-38/FA-30	207,000
33 T'hse /L-2 Blk-23, Alicante St, Town & Country West, Molino Bacoor LA-56 / FA-56 70	726,000
34 L-16 B-1, Ph -1, Mla South Woods Res'l Estate, Baybay, Carmona / LA-1,224	4,604,000
35 Res'l lot / Lots 5486-A-6, 7 & 8 Buhay na Tubig, Brgy Anabu Imus / Net L A - 6,556 40	6,108,000

LAGUNA	MIN BID
36 2 Sty T'hse / Unit-2 Bellbart Elsol Villas T'hms , Poblacion Cabuyao LA-54 / FA-55	615,000
37 2 Sty T'hse / Unit-4 Bellbart Elsol Villas T'hms , Poblacion Cabuyao LA-54 / FA-55	615,000
38 H&L w/ S pool / L-10-C-6 Pansol Calamba (back of Monte Vista) LA-1 141 / FA-336	4,095,000

VALENZUELA	MIN BID
39 2 Sty Bldg/L-23 A 4 N Uruba St, Palasan LA-670 / FA-694	2,070,000
40 Lot/L-551-A-2-A-3, Pineda Compd,Bonifacio St ,Canumay – East / LA - 1,114	2,241,000
41 3-Dr /1-sty Apt w/ warehouse # 92 G Marcelo St , Maysan, Val L A - 500 / F A - 386	3,043,000
42 2 Sty Hse & lot / Lot-1, 2 & 3 Blk-7 cor of Aster, Wisteria & Forsythia Sts , De Castro Subd Bagbaguin / TLA- 650 / FA- 547	7,659,000

MUNTINLUPA – Victoria Homes	MIN BID
43 L-123 B-3-A, Almond St/LA-403	806,000
44 L-125 B-3-A, Almond St/LA-436	872,000
45 L-127 B-3-A Almond St/LA-459	918,000

RESIDENTIAL	
MUNTINLUPA – Victoria Homes	MIN BID
46 L-19 B-3-A, Jasmine St /LA-713	1,476,000
ANGELES CITY, PAMPANGA	MIN BID
47 1 sty H & L / # 434 Oregon St Villa Sol Subd , Brgy Santol (beside Clark) LA-1,063 / FA-160	2,120,000
TARLAC CITY	MIN BID
48 Agro - Ind'l Lot / Lot 3871-D S. Maragul, Tibag / LA-10,001	3,315,000
ANGONO, RIZAL	MIN BID
49 Lot / L-6 Blk-2 Mills St, Sta Monica Classic Estates, Ph-3 Mission Hills, Mababang Parang (via Antipolo) / LA-540	1,677,000
CABANATUAN CITY, N.ECIJA (# 529 Purok Pag-Asa, Daan Sarili)	MIN BID
50 Lot 3-A-8/LA-2,071/NLA-1,820 62	321,000
51 Lot 3-A-5/LA-2,071/NLA-1,847 61	321,000
52 Lot 3-A-4/LA-2,071/NLA-1,847 88	321,000
53 Lot 3-A-3/LA-2,071/NLA-1 846 17	321,000
54 Lot 3-A-2/LA-2 071/NLA-1,848 38	321 000
55 Lot 3-A-1/LA-2 071/NLA-1,839 88	321,000
56 Lot 2-B/LA-2,619/NLA-2,338 68	1,031,000
57 Lot 2-A/LA-2,822/NLA-2,535 36	1,111,000
58 Lot 2-D/LA-2,250/NLA-2,006 08	1,503,000
59 Lot 2-C/LA-2,616/NLA-2,345 81	1,747,000
60 Lot 2-F/LA-2,250/NLA-2,006 88	2,683,000
61 Lot 2-E/LA-2,249/NLA-2,007 48	2,683,000
62 2 Storey resl / Lot 2-G LA-2,384/NLA-1,861 9/FA-138	3,218,000

Orchard Res'l. Estates and Golf & Country Club, Salitran, Dasmarinas, Cavite	
FAIRWAY LOTS	MIN BID
63 L - 31 Blk – 30 / L A – 858	3,261,000
64 L - 17 Blk – 10 / L A – 1,034	3,930,000
65 L - 52 Blk – 17 / L A – 1,130	4,294,000
NON – FAIRWAY LOTS	MIN BID
66 L – 35 Blk - 37 / L A - 687	2,061,000
67 L - 14 Blk - 16 / L A - 828	2,484,000
68 L – 03 Blk - 43 / L A - 855	2,565,000

STA. MARIA, BULACAN – SUNRAYS VILL.	
69 Lot / L – 38 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
70 Lot / L – 39 Blk- 5 / L A - 108	162,000
71 Lot / L – 40 Blk -5 / L A - 116	174,000
72 Lot / L – 41 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
73 Lot / L – 42 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
74 Lot / L – 43 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
75 Lot / L – 50 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
76 Lot / L – 58 Blk - 5 / L A - 48	72,000
77 Lot / L – 59 Blk - 5 / L A - 67	100,500
78 Lot / L – 68 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
79 Lot / L – 69 Blk - 5 / L A - 40	60,000
80 Lot / L – 30 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000
81 Lot / L – 31 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000
82 Lot / L – 32 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000
83 Lot / L – 33 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000
84 Lot / L – 34 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000
85 Lot / L – 35 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000
86 Lot / L – 36 Blk - 1 / L A - 70	105,000

COMMERCIAL

MAKATI	MIN BID
87 Lot/# 3904 Quingua St Brgy Pinagkaisahan / LA-612	12,240,000
88 Condo/ 5/F Millenium Plaza Eduque St / F A - 261 24	12,436,000
89 Lot /Lot-1-B & Lot-2-B Buendia cor Marconi St / TLA-472	15,200,000

QUEZON CITY	MIN BID
90 3 Sty Bldg /# 500 Quirino Hi-way, Brgy Bagbag, Novaliches LA-180 / FA-468	6,300,000
91 Whse /# 185 Roosevelt Ave S F O M / T L A - 5,641	140,000,000

MANILA	MIN BID
92 Dormitory-3 Sty / # 352 M F Jhocson St , Sampaloc L A - 489 3 / T F A - 1,620 5	15,750,000
93 3 Sty Bldg / Anacleto St , (back of # 1933 Rizal Ave) L A – 294 / F A - 810	14,640,000
94 5 Sty Bldg/# 1933 Rizal Ave Sta Cruz LA-381 / FA-1,350	18,435,000
95 2/F KP Twr , CM Recto Ave Cor Juan Luna St / FA-658	23,500,000

PASIG, ORTIGAS CENTER	MIN BID
96 Offc Unit/ Unit # 2004 OMM Citra Bldg San Miguel Ave (w/ parking) / FA-153 64	4,910,000

CABANATUAN CITY, N.ECIJA (# 529 Purok Pag-Asa, Daan Sarili)	MIN BID
97 Agri lot /Lot 3-B/ NLA-37,041	1,893,000
98 Commi lot w/ Whse & Offc Lot 2-H / LA-2,810 /NLA-2,260 67 / FA – 580	4,078,000

SARIAYA, QUEZON PROVINCE	MIN BID
99 Agri lot w/ resi H&L, Whse & Piggery/Lot 6181-A-5-A-1-A-1-I, Psd 4A-001202 Sampaloc TLA -101 038 65 / TFA -9,277	40,548,000

TARLAC CITY	MIN BID
100 Lot/L-4-C, Rizal St /L A -759	6,475,000
101 Lot/L-4-B, Panganiban cor Rizal Sts / L A - 1,102	9,402,000
102 Lot/L-4-A, Panganiban cor Rizal Sts / L A - 1,120	9,554,000

TAGUIG	MIN BID
103 Indl lot/L-2-B-1-A-1 Perfecto Drive, Bagumbayan/ LA-2,920	9,200,000

VALENZUELA CITY	MIN BID
104 Warehse / Lot-13 Temptanza St, Don Pedro Vill, Marulas Val / L A - 2,540 / F A - 3,314	12,200,000

FIXED 13% INTEREST P.A. FOR FIRST 3 YEARS. FIXED 15% INTEREST P.A. FOR NEXT 12 YEARS.
CWT IS FOR THE ACCOUNT OF THE BUYER. JUST BRING P20,000 (CASH OR MC) SHOWMONEY TO QUALIFY TO BID FOR EACH PROPERTY. THE SALE IS ON "AS IS WHERE IS" BASIS. UNIONBANK MAY, AT ANYTIME, WITHDRAW ANY OF THE PROPERTIES LISTED ABOVE PRIOR TO AUCTION DATE.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — LOT

FOR SALE

ANTEL PLATINUM TOWER
Unit 1901 – Makati – 97.38 sq.m.
2 BR 1 parking

ANTEL SEAVIEW – Tower C
Unit 1906 – Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
3 BR 147.08 sq.m. 2 parking

FARM LOT – Tagaytay
Area – 10,000 sq.m

ORCHARD FAIRWAY LOT
Lot 4 Block 30
705 sq.m. Dasmariñas, Cavite

Office hrs. Tel. #: 551-66-90/8317803
Wk ends: Tel. #: 633-1056
Cell #: (0917) 817-7158

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — FARM/FISHPEN/RAWLANDS

Notice is hereby given that the property of 2,292 Has. agri/residential lots at Tanawan, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija is being offered for sale by:
1. Cambaala Primary Multi-Purpose Kilusang Bayan, Inc., CLOA-0-1290 to 1291;
2. East Poblacion Primary Multi-Purpose Kilusang Bayan, Inc., CLOA-0-1297 to 1298;
3. Buklod ng Pagmumuling-Gubat sa Mataas na Bundok, Inc , CLOA-0-1299 to 1301;
4. Samahang Magsasaka ng Pantabangan Foundation sa Nueva Ecija CLOA-0-1294

MARIDOL CUMPIO
719-1844/0919-5860305

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — CONDO/TWNHSE

QUEZON CITY

One BEATRIZ Tower
1st Class COMM'L-OFFICE RES'L CONDO.
AURORA / LAUAN ST., PROJ. 3, Q.C.

READY FOR OCCUPANCY
FOR SALE OR LEASE

Nr. ATENEO • UP • MIRIAM • KOSTKA • PSBA • NCBA
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R-Top S.Pool, Gym, Sauna, Etc.
W/ X'LENT VIEW 360°
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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — COMM'L/RESDL

RIZAL

BIRMINGHAM
Place2/Homes/Sunrise
H&L/Lot/Twnhse
San Mateo 2br1tb grg P1Mup
Cainta 3br 2tb garage P1.5M
Antipolo 2br2tb grge P1.150T
Homebankers 437-8104
Dofel 942-6877

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — HOUSE & LOT

MAKATI

Nr PRC 4BR 2TB/Grge
Tel. 728-3105

MANILA

2Stry 4BR Car Grge w/ Mdsrm
Sampaloc Mla Call • 6454981

MANDALUYONG

201sqm-FA 2sty w/attic 6BR 3TB carport no flood nr Edsa Boni Nice neighbor 8818227/ 0920-2700264 Mrs. Reyes

MARIKINA

New 4BR 3TB 2.8M 9487112

MUNTINLUPA

1.5M Camellia1 3BR 2TB
0919-6470802 / 8128069

PARANAQUE

4-5BR Nr. Mkti/Airport
822-9993 • 0922-8088800

B'New P3M 4br 3tb attic grge nr 8F Sucat T-8937010(Ofc) 8257808/09206387794

PASIG

DE CASTRO SUBD 2Stry P1.8M
LA321/m² FA271/m² 6Bdrms
2T&B Vic 8903461 loc 27

QUEZON CITY

•BNew 4BR2CG M'danao P3.1
•SM Centrpnt BNew 4BR P8.9
•Sto. Domingo BNew 5BR P8.8
•ABS-CBN 5BR5Tb Grdn P12M
371-3996 • 0917-7957850 dbo

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — LOT

QUEZON CITY

Cubao 3BR 3TB 3CGrg Newly Rnvted Gorgeous w/ Duplex & 8DR Apt on Adjacent Lot w/ Income 437-6005. 0927-4364005

Cubao 8DR Apt w/ Income w/ Hse Adjacent Lot 3BR 3TB 3CGrg & Duplex 2BR 2TB 437-6005 • 0927-4364005

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Nr Ateneo 9M & Up Build as per Specs Call 645-3731

PROJ.6 BNEW 9263307

rush Cubao9 5M480m² 4220162

SAMAR AVENUE PROPERTY
4BR 3TB 375m² Bungalow
Call 951-1624 ; 911-1978

Tandang Sora Twn Hse P1.5M unfinished 931-4945

TIERRA BELLA 8M 931-5553

WHITE PLAINS P19M
579m 6br & 6Bb P19M Neg 9114329

RIZAL

250sqm 4br 2tb md / 1b 2car twn & country Call 634-9500

3br 2tb nr antipolo church 346sqm call 634-9500

BIRMINGHAM
Place2/Homes/Sunrise
H&L/Lot/Twnhse
San Mateo 2br1tb grg P1Mup
Cainta 3br 2tb garage P1.5M
Antipolo 2br2tb grge P1.150T
Belen Reyes 655-0134
L.B.Lee Realty 931-8425

OTHER AREAS

266 sqm Call 984-7901

OTHER PROVINCIAL

H&L 4 Sale Regidor St Pacdal BAGUIO T:850-6377

BATANGAS

AYALA PROPERTY AT STO TOMAS BATANGAS 364 SQM HOUSE N LOT 2.5M NEG 500T DP BAL 2 YRS TO PAY W/O INT 0918-9424538

CAVITE

178m²Lot Area 59m²Floor Area 2BR 2TB w/ Dirty Kitchen P1.2M Cityland Carmona Hts 620-6518 • 0919-2085597

LAGUNA

METROVILLE SUBD LA122m² 2bdrms 1T&B FA61.28m² P1.2M Vic 8903461 loc27

LAGUNA BEL-AIR LA132/m² 3bdrms 2T&B FA84/m² P1.85M Vic 8903461 loc27/25

MILAN CAMELLA HOMES 3Stry FA 210/m² LA 78/m² P1.9M Vic 8903461 loc 27/25

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

Kensington Parkplace In Fort Bonifacio Call 634-9500

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.6M C5 Nr The Fort
12T/mo. or 3Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mkti 0917-8313226

MAKATI CONDO 55m² w/1 BR kitchen/T&B 9114705; 9114649

RIZAL TOWER ROCKWELL 3BR FULLY FURNISHED DESIGNER CONDO UNIT 297SQM. MAIDS ROOM 2PARKING BAYS HI FLOOR FANTASTIC MAKATI VIEWS GOOD SECURITY CALL OWNER 0917-5303865 OR 8992364

MANILA

NR LA SALLE TAFT
BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3lb/grge P3.295M 8903461 loc 34

Nr UST 3.6M 4br 3lb 1cg Nr bank, Loan Ok Call 645-3731

MANDALUYONG

Sn Fnesco Gd 3BR w/ Loft Bonl cor Scpnte St 8403141 Joey • 6439997 Malu

MARIKINA

LOYOLA GRAND MANSION 6.5M Neg 202FA 4BR w/attic 4TB S'pool Gazebo Tennis Basketball Court T-435-1779 361-0855 • 924-1647 Cel.0917-8410620 (text msg)

PARANAQUE

RUSH SALE Owner Leaving Sucat Pque nr SM 2BR 2TB FA 74sqm Grge 1.5M Neg. 8425912 09176671098

PASIG

Condo™wnhse Ortigas DBO Call 634-9500

VVS 3BR 197 FA T634-9500

VVerde 2 62m² P2M 9122304

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO 1.4M 10% DP 9132224

LVN Townhomes U-16 34-36 P. Tuazon St. Cubao 3BR with attic P25K/mo Annie 7269811; 7260644

Thse Happy Homes Tandang Sora Daisy 2547983, 5414025

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RIZAL

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BIRMINGHAM
Place2/Homes/Sunrise
H&L/Lot/Twnhse
San Mateo 2br1tb grg P1Mup
Cainta 3br 2tb garage P1.5M
Antipolo 2br2tb grge P1.150T
NORMA 656-5907
HUMAN 947-0325

SAN JUAN

SAN JUAN CONDO 3BR-3.5M T.H.-5.5M 09184491555

OTHER AREAS

5 Tagaytay Townhouses For Sale, Overlooking 1st Class 0917-8118436

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — LOT

KALOOCAN

RAINBOW VILLAGE5 LA216m² P3,473/m² Vic 8903461 loc25

MARIKINA

FAIRLANE SUBD
350sqm@P5th nego
ST. BENEDICT SUBD
240sqm@P5th nego
GREENHTS SUBD, JP RIZAL
2lots 600sqm@P13th neg
0916-7807150/9418227

PARANAQUE

Multinati Subd 355m² P7500 TEL 5504592 • 5301859

PASIG

Kawilihan Vill 314m²Lot RUSH! P4.7M 0917-8417590

METROVILLE SUBD LA 333m² P4,054/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

ROSARIO 4,379m² 6413650

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — LOT

QUEZON CITY

Tierra Pura-Mira Nila choice lots 931-4946

VILLA ESPANA LA108.50m² P12,000/m² Vic8903461loc27

OTHER AREAS

1250 Cagayan de Oro Hway Ideal Condo Comm'l 658-4998 • 658-0576

TAGAYTAY ROYALE 300m² with Share P1M only 6337601-03

TOWN & CNTRY HILLS LA240m² P3,125/m² Vic 8903461loc 27

BATANGAS

RANCHO VISTA SUBD LA613m² P2,284/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

TAAL BTGS nr Diversion Rd 6794m² P185.50/m² Vic8903461

BULACAN

SAN MIGUEL BUL LA 4000m² P180/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

TOWN & COUNTRY LA 180m² P2,900/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

CAVITE

DON BOSCO EXEC HTS LA128m² P2,900/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

ST. CHARBEL DASMA LA371m² P2,650/m² Vic8903461 loc27

LAGUNA

Belair3 Owner Leaving Rush Brokers Accld 0917-8152912

•KENSINGTON•
LOW DP 10yrstopay 8472625

S - POINT CABUYAO 9122304

SOUTH PEAK P5,000/m² LA240m² Vic8903461loc25/27

VARIED AREAS

8 Lots Antipolo Com/Res 10 Lots Com/Res 1Lot Baguio 8189385 8935151 8872503

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — FARM/FISHPEN/RAWLANDS

Bulacan1501m²=P1M&2ha= P8M Beng 9314466 /9124573

BULACAN

SAN MIGUEL BUL LA 4000m² P180/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

BATANGAS

TAAL BTGS nr Diversion Rd 6794m² P185.50/m² Vic8903461

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE — CLUB SHARE & MEMBERSHIP

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REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

PASIG

3BR CAP 8 09192064003

QUEZON CITY

3BR 4CR 12T 9125286 Pr4

SAN JUAN

Studio 2BR P6Tonly 7008515

BAGUIO

BUNG 1,600/DAY FF 9122304

LAGUNA

S. JOSE AYL 09192064003

PASAY

Nr SSC DLSU 4br 2T&B, Big Terrace 2-car garage Mds' & Drvr's Rm w/ T&B T-8079713

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*FOR LEASE
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CONDO/TWNHSE

KALOOCAN

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MAKATI

3BR VIL. GUAD 09192064003

MAKATI 4BR 0919-5560249

RIZAL TOWER ROCKWELL 3BR FULLY FURNISHED DESIGNER CONDO UNIT 297SQM. MAIDS ROOM 2PARKING BAYS HI FLOOR FANTASTIC MAKATI VIEWS GOOD SECURITY CALL OWNER 0917-5303865 OR 8992364

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PASIG

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QUEZON CITY

2BR Furn P15T/mo Good Location Call Savell 6461603

3BR 2TB 108m² w/ parking 12T •Valencia cor Castilla QC 7267909•09175325838 Rowena

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Stdio 8128609 0919-5470802

OHT-3 2br furnish Unit 17-H East Wood City Libis 633-0164

SAN JUAN

Ghills Stu P11T FF 929-9835

APARTMENT

MAKATI

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MANILA

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PARANAQUE

8201453 PQUE LOPEZ SUCAT

PASAY

2STRY 2BRM 1TB 8438173

PASIG

1BR BGILOG PASIG 6714947

QUEZON CITY

APT 4 RENT 6T/mo 245-6946

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MOVE IN CONDITION
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(Republic of China)

Strictly no Addendum

As per AO # 32 S2000 of the Department of Agriculture Exhibitors are required to bring the updated vaccination records of their dogs duly certified by a Veterinarian with an updated PRC license and PTR.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late RODOLFO R. RESTUA was extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc 289, Page 59, Book XIII Series of 2003 before Notary Public Jose Ronald Valles of Pasig City. (PDI-Jan. 11, 18, 25, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ETHELWALDO ZARCO BAUTISTA was settled by his sole heir through an Affidavit of Adjudication. As Per Doc No.385; Page No.78; Book No. 01; Series of 2003. Notary Public Ma. Amparo H. Villamor for Makati City.
PDI-Dec.28, 2003 Jan.4 &11, 2004

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WHEREFORE, premises considered, judgment is hereby rendered declaring the marriage between plaintiff **SUSAN M. BECLES** and defendant **SERGIO M. BECLES** celebrated on July 8, 1991 by Hon Lucas P. Bersamin of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 96, Quezon City, **NULL AND VOID**, ab initio, on the ground of psychological incapacity on the part of defendant to comply with essential marital obligations of marriage, under Article 36 of the Family Code.

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Central Luzon Regional Office
Cabanatuan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites all interested to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

A. *For suppliers, manufacturers/installers/fabricators*

NAME OF PROJECT	LOCATION	APPROVED BUDGET
Re-bidding for the re-roofing of Whse #1 & Canopies of Whse #2	Balanga, Bataan	P 900,000.00

B. *For general contractors with technical knowhow or specialization in waterproofing using Polyurethane Spray Foam Technology Application or Contractors having Joint Venture with Applicators which Specialize on same.*

NAME OF PROJECT	LOCATION	APPROVED BUDGET
Application of Polyurethane Spray Foam on Duplex Warehouse #11 Rooling	Cabanatuan City	P 3,000,000 00

SCHEDULE OF PRE-QUALIFICATION, PRE-BIDDING AND BIDDING

Issuance of Contractor's Eligibility Forms	February 02-12, 2004
Deadline for Submission of Accomplished Contractor's Eligibility Forms & Requirements	February 17, 2004 (5:00 PM)
Issuance of Bid Documents	February 24, 2004 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)
Pre-bidding Conference	March 02, 2004 (2:00 PM)
Submission and Opening of Bids	March 12, 2004 (2:00 PM)

Interested contractors shall submit their Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposal in the prescribed forms to the Chairman of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), National Food Authority, Maharlika Highway, Cabanatuan City.

Eligibility forms may be secured from the NFA-BAC Secretariat upon presentation of Letter of Intent and payment of non-refundable fee of Php 500.00 per project.

Bidding Documents and Plans shall be issued only to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php 2,000.00 per project.

All particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference,Bid Evaluation and Award of Contracts shall be governed by the provisions of RA9184 and other applicable rules and regulations.

Venue for the Pre-bidding Conference, Submission and Opening of Bids shall be at the NFA-Conference Room, Regional Office, Maharlika Highway, Cabanatuan City.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality and to accept only such bids or to award to any contractor whose bid is considered most advantageous to National Food Authority.

The NFA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) RUBEN J. RESIDE
Asst. Regional Manager/RBAC Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 11 & 18, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The National Food Authority (NFA) is inviting all eligible palay Farmers' Organizations (FOs) to participate in the distribution of rice under the "FARMERS AS DISTRIBUTORS" (FAD) Program of the National Food Authority.

All interested parties are advised to accomplish a Letter of Intent (LOI), copies of which are available at the NFA Provincial Offices in their respective areas, to be submitted within ten (10) working days after the last day of publication. They should likewise meet the following qualifications:

- Must be operational and registered with any of the appropriate registering agencies as listed below
  - Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
  - Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
  - Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR)
  - Bureau of Rural Workers (BRW)
  - National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Must be a member of a local farmers' action council or the Philippine Farmers' Advisory Board (PFAB).
- Must be a holder of NFA license as retailer/wholesaler and other incidental lines of activities, i.e., warehousing and transporting, if any.
- Must be a holder of Certificate of Operations and Good Standing issued by the appropriate registering agency, to be submitted to the concerned NFA Provincial Office.

Specifically, the NFA has allocated a total volume of some 903,874 bags of rice for this Program, distributed among regions as follows:

Region	Allocation
NCR	4,248
Ilocos Region	84,241
Cagayan Valley	117,684
Central Luzon	126,452
Southern Tagalog	80,806
Bicol	61,554
Western Visayas	130,790
Central Visayas	19,524
Eastern Visayas	51,250
Western Mindanao	37,963
Northern Mindanao	42,844
Southern Mindanao	55,859
Central Mindanao	51,702
ARMM	38,957

For details, they may coordinate with the nearest NFA Office in their respective areas. For further inquiries, they may visit or contact NFA-DMO located at the 5th Flr., Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City with telephone nos. **712-1572, 712-1708** or **712-1564.**

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP**
Administrator, NFA

(PDI - Jan. 10, 11 & 12, 2004)

ERRATUM

The Department of Education would like to correct in its Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid published on January 9, 2004 issue of PDI the following packages to be read as:

Package	Description	Approved Budget
2	Printing of National Achievement Test's Testbooklets and Delivery and Retrieval of TB's and Answer Sheets	P28,000,000.00
3	Printing of Non-Classified Materials	P1,000,000.00

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ILUMINADA QUINTOS CAYOSA

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on January 10, 2004 at the age of 79.

Her husband : **Aldegundo B. Cayosa, Sr.**

Her children : **Cecile & Johnny Borromeo**
Egon & Mitoy Cayosa
Ali & Dette Cayosa
Charo & Benjie Bañez

Her grandchildren : **Chico & Celine Borromeo**
Andre, Marco, Clara & Niña Cayosa
Rachelle, Al & Aldion Cayosa
Hannah & Patricia Bañez

are requesting prayers for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Cayosa residence in Pamplona, Cagayan.

Interment will be on January 14, 2004 at 12:00 noon in Pamplona, Cagayan.

ALEJANDRA MACASAET vda. de DELOVINO

(wife of the late Protasio G. Delovino)

of Basey, Samar

Joined her Creator on January 9, 2004 at the age of 91.

Her bereaved children, Dr. Raquel D. Malimas, & Atty. Nap Malimas, Carmelita D. Lista & Anthony Lista, Ma. Corazon D. Marabut & Norito Marabut, Sr., Hon. Mansueto "Monching" Delovino & Dr. Agnes R. Delovino, Prosecutor Ella D. Fernandez (deceased), and Dr. Jovita C. Jadloc, her grandchildren, and nephews & nieces, request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Garden Suite, Loyola Mem. Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City. A Holy Mass will be held on Monday, January 12, at 8:00 P.M. at the Nstra. Senora de Gracia Parish Church. On Tuesday, it will be transferred to Basey, Samar. Interment will be on Saturday, January 17, at 12:00 Noon, after the 10:00 A.M. Mass at the St. Michael Church, at the Macasaet-Delovino Mausoleum at Basey Catholic Cemetery.

"Don't grieve for me, for how I'm free
I'm following the path God
laid for me..."

MIGUEL BALTHAZAR SITYAR

July 6, 1917 - November 22, 2003

Died in his residence at San Diego, California at the of age of 76.

His cremated remains will be honored with a memorial Mass on January 17, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. at the Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Parish at Camerino St., Project 4, Quezon City.

His wife **Lee**; children **Manuel & Rosita, Nina & Paul, and Ricky**; grandchildren **James, Noel & Ameyrah** would like to request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul. A celebration of life will shortly follow after the ceremony.

Message of Thanks

The family and relatives of the late

LEONCIA CRUZ PUZON

wish to convey our sincere gratitude to all those who comforted us with their presence, blessed us with their prayers, embraced us with their love, reminded us of God's love and faithfulness through flowers and messages, attended the funeral rites and in many immeasurable ways helped us during our time of bereavement.

CLEOPATRA V. MADARAL

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on the 7th day of January 2004 at the age of 56.

Her loving husband **Luisito**; parents **Feliciano** and **Cecilia Menor**; siblings **Linda, Bong, Bing, Bogie**; nephew and nieces, in-laws, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Villa Funeral Homes in the church of Our Lady of Peace and Voyage. There will be a Mass on the 12th day of January 2004 at 1:00 p.m. Interment will follow at the San Carlos Memorial Park, General Santos City.

Message of Thanks

We, the family and relatives of the late

RODRIGO "RODGIE" P. BACANI

of Angeles City

who passed away in the grace of our Lord on January 9, 2004, wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all those who offered masses, prayers and flowers, visited and kept vigil and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

SALVADOR A. VASQUEZ

of 31 P. Ladia Street, Project 4, Q.C.

Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 9, 2004 at the age of 58.

His wife **Vicky**; children **Aljo, Alan and Ajie** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Parish, Legaspi St. corner Camerino Street, Project 4, Q.C.

Interment will be on January 13, 2004, 2:00 p.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

PRETTY pastel and summer shades for Nicolette Bell with the Bermuda Collection. Mai handsewed the samples of this bag.

Segue to style

The top Italian house of bags starts a new chapter in fashion by opening stores in Manila

ANDREA Zini and Mai Cojuangco, Segue's first couple, snip the ribbon to open the Glorietta 2 store. Another branch is in SM Megamall.

SEGUE designer Mai Cojuangco, arguably one of the Philippine's loveliest, and her fiancé, Segue's Italian managing director Andrea Zini, spent the holidays here in Manila in time to open two new Segue stores at Glorietta 2 and SM Megamall Building A.

Segue comes from the same family which produces bags for world-famous brands Benetton and Sisley. In Manila, Segue carries the two brands along with its own line of bags.

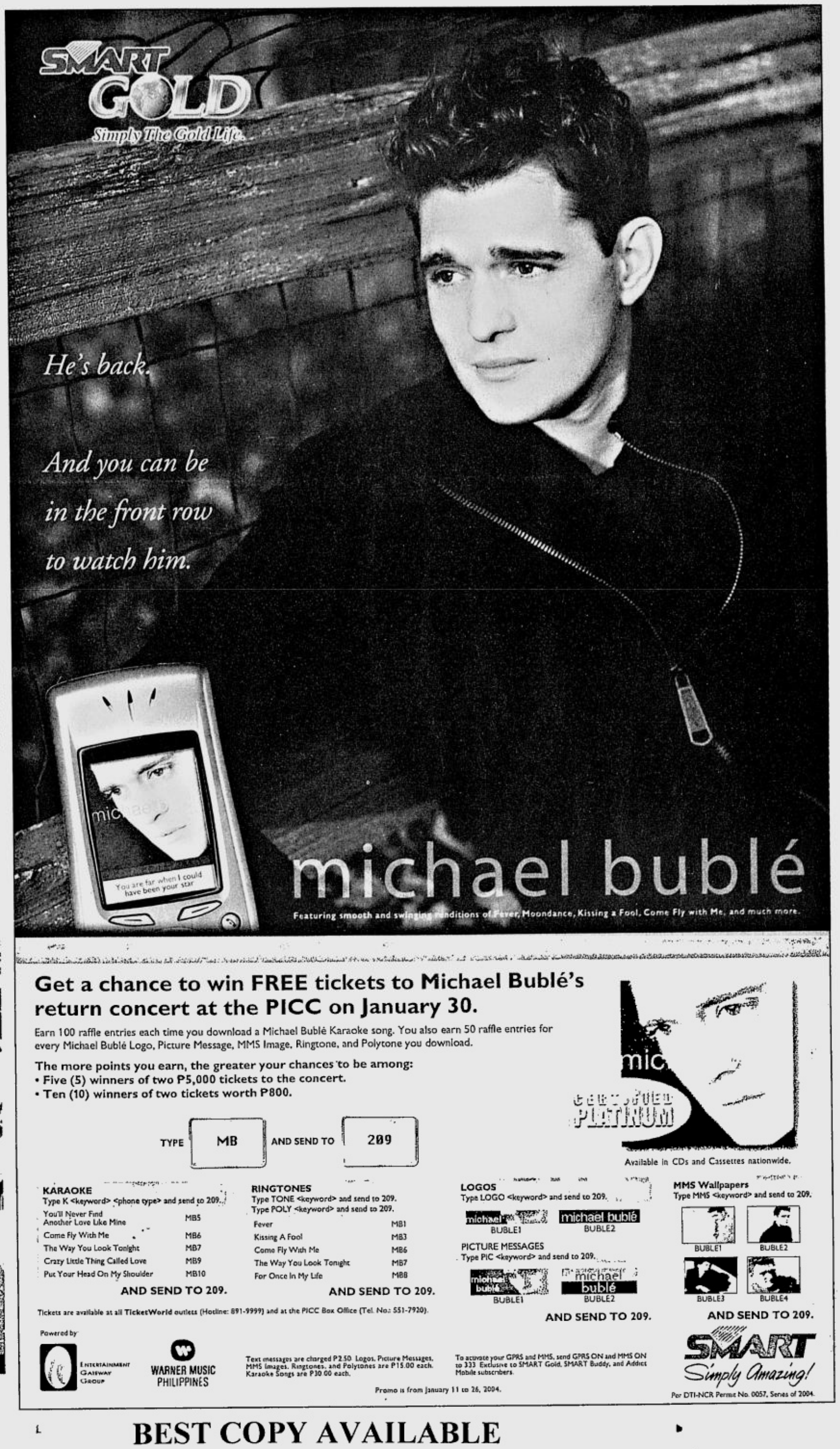
Joining Mai and Andrea at the opening of the Megamall store was Talk 'N Text superstar and PBA MVP Asi Taulava, who came with his lovely wife Anna Mae. Also present was expressionist Kiko Escora, one of today's most promising young artists. The artist created another masterpiece for the opening—a canvas guest book.

The cutting-edge Segue stores were designed by top European designers, architects and consultants using only top-quality materials. The design sought to maximize the consumer's shopping experience.

SEGUE/ C2

CES Drilon

RISSA Samson modeling the Dandy Collection



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You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine	MB5
Come Fly With Me	MB6
The Way You Look Tonight	MB7
Crazy Little Thing Called Love	MB9
Put Your Head On My Shoulder	MB10

AND SEND TO 209.

RINGTONES
Type TONE <keyword> and send to 209.
Type POLY <keyword> and send to 209.

Fever	MB1
Kissing A Fool	MB3
Come Fly With Me	MB6
The Way You Look Tonight	MB7
For Once In My Life	MB8

AND SEND TO 209.

LOGOS
Type LOGO <keyword> and send to 209.
BUBLE1 BUBLE2

PICTURE MESSAGES
Type PIC <keyword> and send to 209.
BUBLE1 BUBLE2

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BUBLE1 BUBLE2 BUBLE3 BUBLE4

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Tickets are available at all TicketWorld outlets (Hotline: 891-9999) and at the PICC Box Office (Tel. No.: 551-7920).

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Promo is from January 11 to 26, 2004.

SMART Simply Amazing!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0057, Series of 2004.

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0918) 382-4061 or (0916) 200-1160
or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Segue to style

PRETTY pastel and summer shades for Nicolette Bell with the Bermuda Collection. Mai handsewed the samples of this bag.

The top Italian house of bags starts a new chapter in fashion by opening stores in Manila

ANDREA Zini and Mai Cojuangco, Segue's first couple, snip the ribbon to open the Glorietta 2 store. Another branch is in SM Megamall.

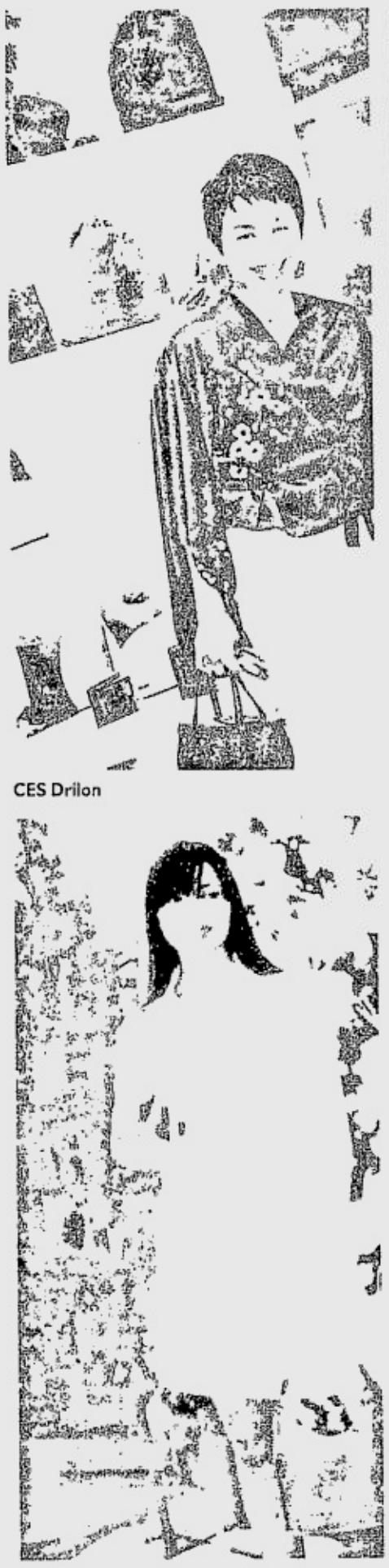
SEGUE designer Mai Cojuangco, arguably one of the Philippine's loveliest, and her fiancé, Segue's Italian managing director Andrea Zini, spent the holidays here in Manila in time to open two new Segue stores at Glorietta 2 and SM Megamall Building A.

Segue comes from the same family which produces bags for world-famous brands Benetton and Sisley. In Manila, Segue carries the two brands along with its own line of bags.

Joining Mai and Andrea at the opening of the Megamall store was Talk 'N Text superstar and PBA MVP Asi Taulava, who came with his lovely wife Anna Mae. Also present was expressionist Kiko Escora, one of today's most promising young artists. The artist created another masterpiece for the opening—a canvas guest book.

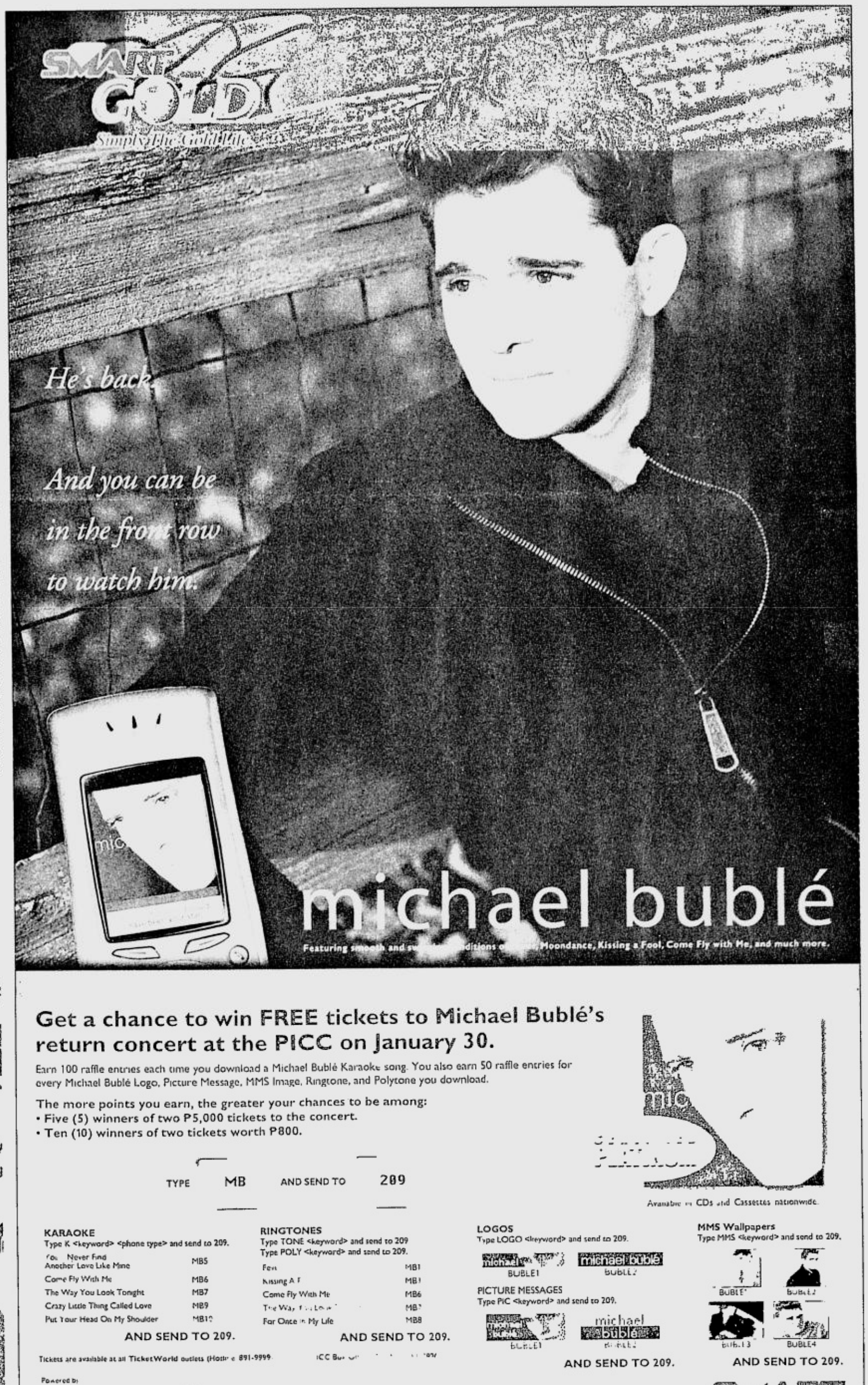
The cutting-edge Segue stores were designed by top European designers, architects and consultants using only top-quality materials. The design sought to maximize the consumer's shopping experience.

SEGUE C2



CES Drilon

RISSA Samson modeling the Dandy Collection



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Come Fly With Me	MB6
The Way You Look Tonight	MB7
Crazy Little Thing Called Love	MB9
Put Your Head On My Shoulder	MB10

AND SEND TO 209.

RINGTONES
Type TONE <keyword> and send to 209
Type POLY <keyword> and send to 209.

Fever	MB1
Kissing A Fool	MB1
Come Fly With Me	MB6
The Way You Look Tonight	MB7
For Once In My Life	MB8

AND SEND TO 209.

LOGOS
Type LOGO <keyword> and send to 209.

PICTURE MESSAGES
Type PIC <keyword> and send to 209.

AND SEND TO 209.

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104.

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JENNI Epperson leaves her mark on the canvas guestbook.

Segue to style

THE PERFECT match. Raya Mananquil enjoys two bags in one with the Tandem collection.

From page C1

Following the store opening, there was an exclusive sneak peek by guests of Segue's Spring-Summer 2004 collection, which was modeled by the Professional Models Association of the Philippines led by Benetton models Rissa Samson and Tim Yap.

Already an integral part of Italian fashion design in Europe, Segue is destined to become a fixture in local fashion.

The Segue stores now carry the 2004 Spring-Summer collection from Benetton and Sisley, and soon, the 2004 Segue Spring-Summer collection.

BAGS all over. Nicolette with the Portland Collection and Robbie Mananquil with the Flanagan Collection

A JOY TO CARRY. Tim Yap with the Fizz Collection

WHITES and chains for Valerie de los Santos with the Julep Collection

CHEERS! Segue to a new beginning. Anna Mae and Asi Taulava, Mai Cojuangco and Andrea Zini with Gift Gate's Virgie Ramos at the Segue branch on the ground floor of SM Megamall Bldg. A

THE SEGUE "guestbook" by Kiko Escora

ARTIST Kiko Escora signs his name on the blank canvas-cum-guestbook.

71st anniversary of apparitions of Virgin of the Poor

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang

JAN. 15 is the 71st anniversary of the first of eight apparitions to Mariette Beco in Banneux, Belgium of the Virgin of the Poor, recognized by the Bishop of Liege on Aug. 22, 1949. Churches that venerate the Virgin will hold special Masses on that day.

"Nothing is more simple and humble than the message of Banneux: Mary reveals herself to Mariette by telling her, 'I am the Virgin of the Poor.' 'I come to alleviate suffering.' 'I am the Mother of the Savior, Mother of God.'

"Mary asks for a small chapel to be built and takes the child to a spring and invites her to 'push her hands' into it. Mary tells Mariette that 'the spring is reserved for all nations, for the sick.' In 1999, the Banneux shrine was recognized as a national shrine by the bishops of Belgium." (Abbe Joseph Cassart, rector of the Shrine).

During his pastoral visit to the Shrine on May 21, 1985, Pope John Paul II said: "Let us not neglect the spiritual and human energies, which often dwell in the sick. With them, let us cooperate in the grace of suffering." (from "The Virgin of the Poor: a tribute from her Filipino children" by Mila Dolores, pp. vii and 23).

Msgr. Josefino Ramirez, vicar general of the archdiocese of Manila, chose to enshrine the Virgin of the Poor which he received on Oct. 31, 2003, at the Perpetual Eucharist Adoration Chapel of the National Shrine and Minor Basilica of San Lorenzo Ruiz in Binondo. Another statue from Banneux that arrived last October, facilitated by the Secretariat for International Affairs of our Bureau of Customs, is enshrined at the Port of Manila, and another statue made by Lecel Crafts (owned by Leni and Celso Buccat) is prominently situated beside the flagpole of the Manila International Container Port.

Gina de Venecia will bring a statue to an orphanage in Alabang on Jan. 15 where it will be enshrined. For prayers, please write to Mila Dolores at 24 Scout Borromeo, 1103 QC, and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. The book "Virgin of the Poor" is available at St. Paul bookstores.

Counting our blessings

I have a notebook where I write down the blessings for the day on one page, and the good deeds I did on that day on the other page, under the title "extra mile." This means going out the extra mile for someone. As the year ended, I summarized the good things that happened during the past year.

As you write down the blessings at the end of the day before you go to bed, you will feel very good. You write down "Thank you God for..." and the particular blessing. On the other side, you write down the good deed, like giving bread to a street urchin who rewards you with a smile.

My friend Linda Francisco of Piandre tells me that God loves the poor because they are very grateful for little things. They are childlike in their poverty and happy with the little they have.

In a gift-giving at Barangay Olympia, Makati, where 170 poor children were invited, there was a game called "Cinderella" where kids were asked to try on sandals. There were 45 pairs available.

"You should have seen the smile on their faces," Linda told me. That is one good deed that Linda can write down on her notebook. When we count our blessings, we are able to cope when things go bad. Being able to count our blessings, big or small, shows our faith in God.

With the bad things that we read in the newspapers, we feel sad. But we cannot remain sad, we have to move on. We cannot stop doing good for the poor. One way to counteract the bad is to do a good deed. If we do so every day, we light a candle in the darkness of despair. We become instruments for good.

The devotees of Our Lady of the Pillar who are natives of Zamboanga hold the yearly novena Masses in October in honor of Our Lady. Rain or shine, they are always there. On Oct. 12 every year, they hold a Mass at the Malate Church followed by a reception at the Aristocrat restaurant. They have been doing this for the past 20 years.

La Hermandad Zamboangueña continues to finance the schooling of 25 college scholars from poor families in Zamboanga. Besides paying their tuition, it gives each student a P500 monthly allowance.

So let's continue to do good as we accept the new year. Get a notebook and write down your blessings and your good deeds. Let us thank God for every new day.

Mercedes Miranda and Karen Lim continue to make beautiful bags from native materials in Cebu. They do not stop production because the economy is bad. They have to move on and give jobs to their employees who weave the bags for them. For more information, please text 0917-3210711.

Putting Jesus at the Center

Another way to cope is to put Jesus at the center of our lives. St. Teresa de Avila said "God alone suffices!" "Let nothing disturb you." All things pass. God alone suffices. However bad things may seem, God will take care of things.

I will always remember what I read one time: God will not give you problems you cannot solve. After all, He is there to solve them for you.

St. Nicholas of Bari

I came to know about St. Nicholas of Bari when the aunt of Cyndy Lilles Maceda's friend handed me an *estampita* of the saint. I was having lunch with friends and Cyndy was at the other table.

The image of St. Nicholas of Bari is enthroned at the St. Vincent de Paul Church on San Marcelino Street. I went to the church last Dec. 24 to pray to St. Nicholas.

He is said to be an intercessor for financial difficulties because he was born of a wealthy family and shared his wealth with the poor. His feast day is Dec. 6, but every Monday at the San Marcelino Church, a prayer is said to him.

I would appreciate it if someone could send me another *estampita* of the saint. Mail it to me at P.O. Box 2050, Manila.

Sto. Niño 2004 exhibit

The Congregacion de Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus will hold its exhibit and novena Masses Jan. 15-24. The grand procession to the Quirino Grandstand will be held Jan. 25 at 3 p.m. Registration is 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Jan. 12-14 at the 3/F of the Philippine National Bank Long Gallery.

First day of novena is at 4:30 p.m., Jan. 15 after the opening of the exhibit. Ben Farrales is founding chair of the congregation.

VIRGIN of the Poor, patroness of Banneux, Belgium

Lady of Piat's 400th year

On Jan. 11, joyous Cagayan Valley devotees of Our Lady of Piat will converge in the town of Lallo for the commencement of the Voyage of Peace. Lallo was the first center of government and where the first church in northern Luzon was established immediately after the founding of Manila in 1572.

Archbishop of Tuguegarao Diosdado A. Tamalayan conceptualized the Voyage of Peace to help the valley internalize the special spiritual meaning of the 2004 celebration. "Our Lady's presence throughout the valley, from its original boundaries until she reaches Piat, will be a 'visitation' to deliver the message of love and peace, as our Lady is also known as the Lady of the Visitation."

From Lallo, the Blessed Mother of the Rosary was sent to Tuao to help pacify the warring tribes of the Itawes region. She was later known as the Our Lady of Piat, a hilltop town of the Itawes region.

This time, from Lallo, the image will be brought by Bishop Ramon Villena to Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, which was part of the original Cagayan Valley, "realm" of the Queen of the Valley. The title was bestowed upon Our Lady of Piat during the canonical coronation by a Vatican representative in 1954. This makes 2004 a double celebration for Cagayan Valley.

The program prepared by Msgr. Samuel S. Baculi, vicar general of the archdiocese of Tuguegarao, will start with an early morning Mass, followed by a special lecture on the Our Lady of Piat by Dominican historian Fr. Eladio Neira, O.P. In the evening, the Quadricentennial Marian Choral Competition organized by the BCBP Brothers (Brotherhood of Christian Businessman and Professionals), Diddi Perez and Oscar Ganabban will be held.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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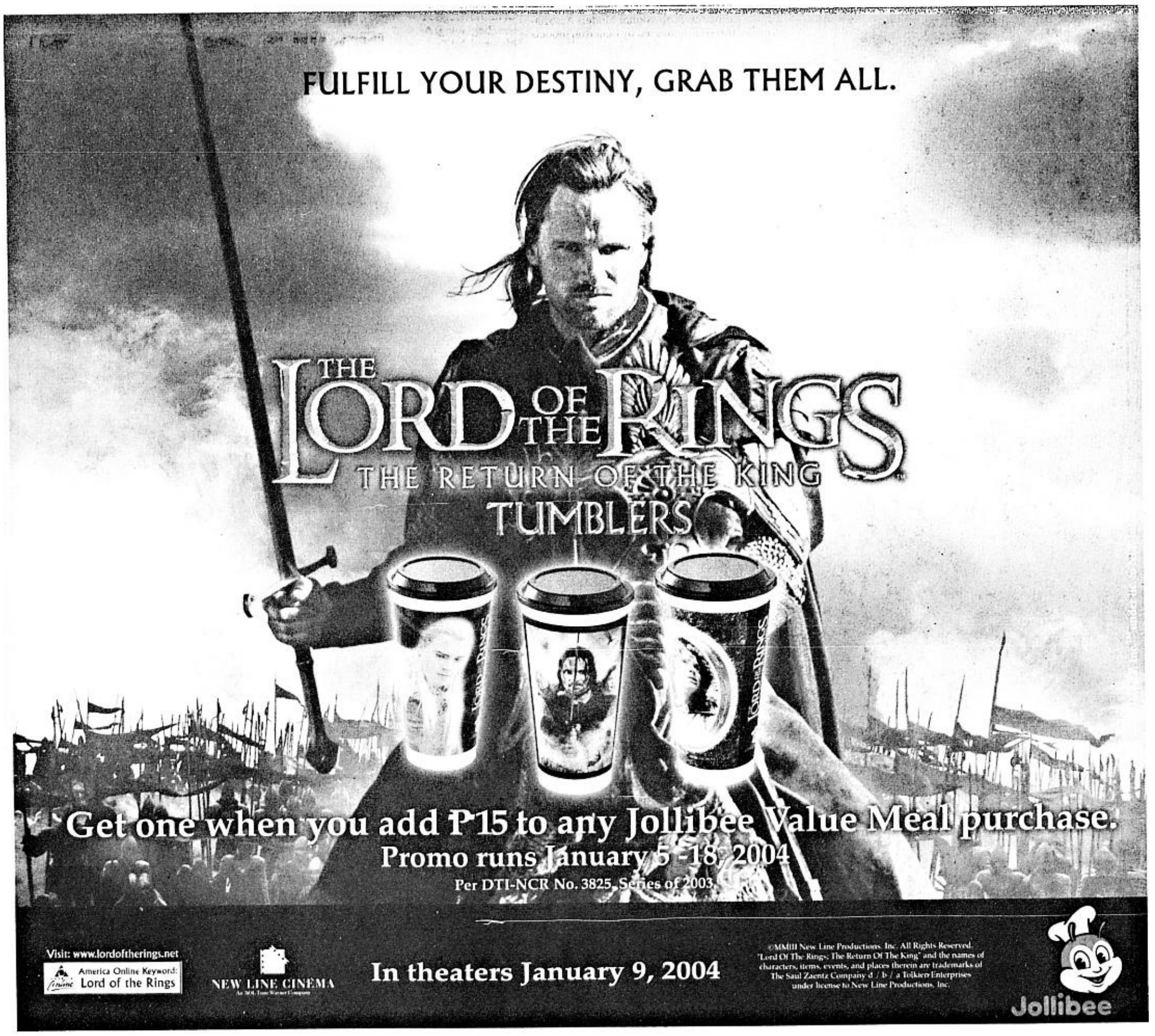

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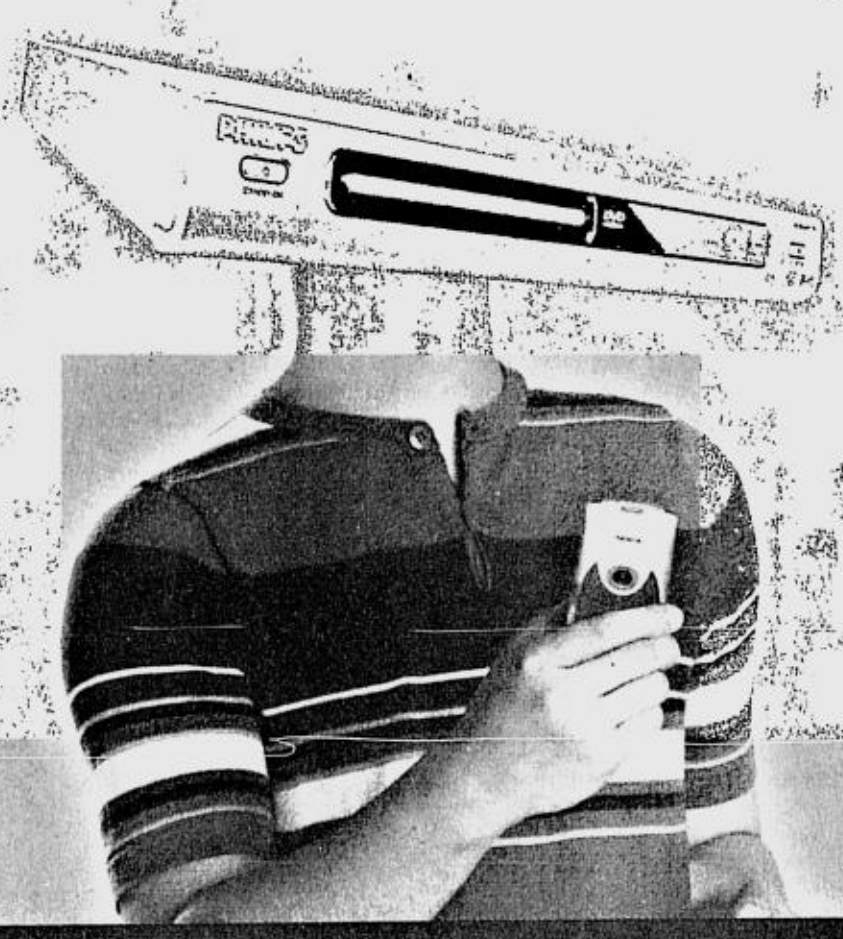

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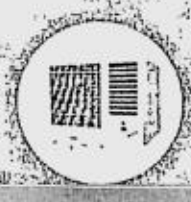

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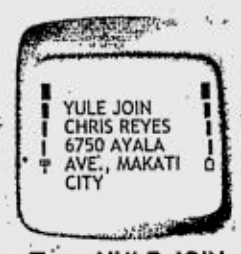

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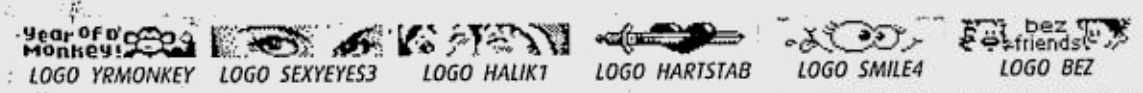

Ringtones

RINGTONE	ARTIST/COMPOSER	KEYWORDS
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Forever's Not Enough	Sarah Geronimo	TONE 4EVERSNOT
Mr. Suave	Parokya ni Edgar	TONE MRSUAVE
Where Is The Love	Black Eyed Peas	TONE WERISLUV
Spaghetti Song	Sexbomb	TONE SPAG
Maybe	Enrique Iglesias	TONE MAYBE
I'll Be	Edwin McCain	TONE IBE
Elesi	River Maya	TONE ELESI
Perfect	True Faith	TONE PERFECT
Rain On Me	Ashanti	TONE RAINON
Unwell	Matchbox 20	TONE UNWELL
Kanlungan	Noel Cabangon	TONE KANLUNGAN
I'm Lovin' It	Justin Timberlake	TONE IMLOVINH
Life For Rent	Dido	TONE LIFEFOR
Broken Vow	Lara Fabian	TONE BROKEN
Get Busy	Sean Paul	TONE GETBUSY
Thoia Thoing	R. Kelly	TONE THOIA
Build Me Up, Buttercup	Sound Alike	TONE BUTTERCUP
The Sun Always Shines On TV	AHA	TONE SUNTV
Since I Told You It's Over	Stereophonics	TONE SINCEI
Numb	Linkin Park	TONE NUMB
Asereje	Las Ketchup	TONE ASEREJE
Behind Blue Eyes	Limp Bizkit	TONE BEHINDB
From The Inside	Linkin Park	TONE FROMTHE
Can't Lose You	F4	TONE CANTLOSE
Awit Ng Kabataan	Rivermaya	TONE KABATAAN
Faint	Linkin Park	TONE FAINT
Crazy Little Thing Called Love	Michael Buble	TONE CRAZYL
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Here comes Guyito, all dressed in white!

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Chito Vecina

ALL of them should be winners," announced one of the judges, thoroughly awed with the 16 finalists of the Guyito's Wedding March contest.

She had good reason to be impressed. The entries remarkably so exceeded expectations that a popular designer, one of the judges, complained the finalists outdid the designs of professional designers like him.

But, of course, as in every contest, only one would take home the P25,000 grand kitty to be awarded today at the Glorietta Activity Center, and have his or her work displayed in the same venue alongside the designs of such formidable names as Inno Sotto, Eddie Baddeo, Rajo Laurel, Ben Farrales, Eric Pineda, Frederick Peralta, Patis Tesoro, Jojie Lloren and Bobby Novenario.

The contest, which called for aspiring designers to create wedding frocks for the INQUIRER's mascot, Guyito, is the highlight of the bridal fair called Wedding March at Glorietta that ends today at the Glorietta Activity Center. The event is copresented by the INQUIRER and cbv7 Media Master.

Dream gown

Junel L. Gallon's Filipiniana design made of *abaca* was the unanimous choice for the grand prize—a masterfully executed Maria Clara design that included a long, beaded train and a Spanish parasol for the bride, and a gold *jusi* barong for the groom, complete with *salakot* and antique neckpiece. INQUIRER chair Marixi R. Prieto, who was one of the judges, called it the "dream [wedding] gown."

A 25-year-old marketing graduate who works with Del Monte Phils., Gallon submitted two entries. Ironically, he said, the winning piece was easier to make than his other entry, which caused him sleepless nights and cuts on his fingers.

Gallon credited half of the work to his mother, who's a part-time dressmaker. He designed the gowns; his mother sewed them. But all other details, like the beadings, were done by the young designer.

Though Gallon's father is also a part-time tailor, the young man said everything he knew about design was through reading and research. He didn't take up fine arts or design in college because "it's expensive." Giving in to his creative leanings, he would regularly pore through wedding magazines to learn how the gowns are made. He proudly said some of his works had been published in this section's Milestones pages.

"Some neighbors and officemates would ask me to design gowns for them, and my mother and I would make them," he said. The young man takes pride in the craft of dressmaking because "it's what fed us and sent us to school."

Liberating the beast

Second-place winner Ira Daylo had an insightful concept for her own entry. Her bride and groom Guyito were set atop a *kangga* (Zambal term for wheel-less *karitela*) because she wanted to "liberate" the carabao as a beast of burden.

The 35-year-old History and Philippine Government instructor at Colegio ng Subic said her work was greatly influenced by a creative-writing workshop she attended prior to the contest. "I wanted to show rather than tell, so I had to ask myself, 'What is Guyito? What does it represent?'"

Married to an Aeta who creates handicraft as a hobby, Daylo asked her husband to create the *kangga*. She said all materials that went into the bridal frocks were scrap and recycled materials, some of which even came from her own wedding gown! The rope-like material that became the gown's bodice came from her sister's old hat, which she crocheted. The bride's red "lips" were seeds she found in her in-laws' home.

Daylo will be awarded the P15,000 cash prize.

No stranger to design competitions, third-place winner Bobby del Mundo said he pays close at-

HERE/ D4

RURAL AFFAIR. Second prize-winning entry by Ira Daylo of Subic Bay, Zambales

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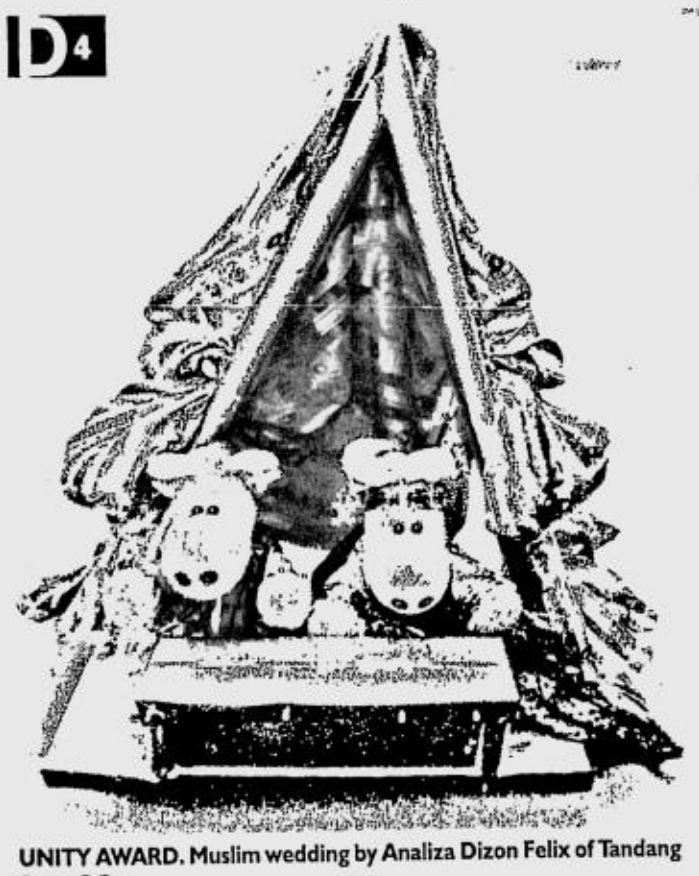
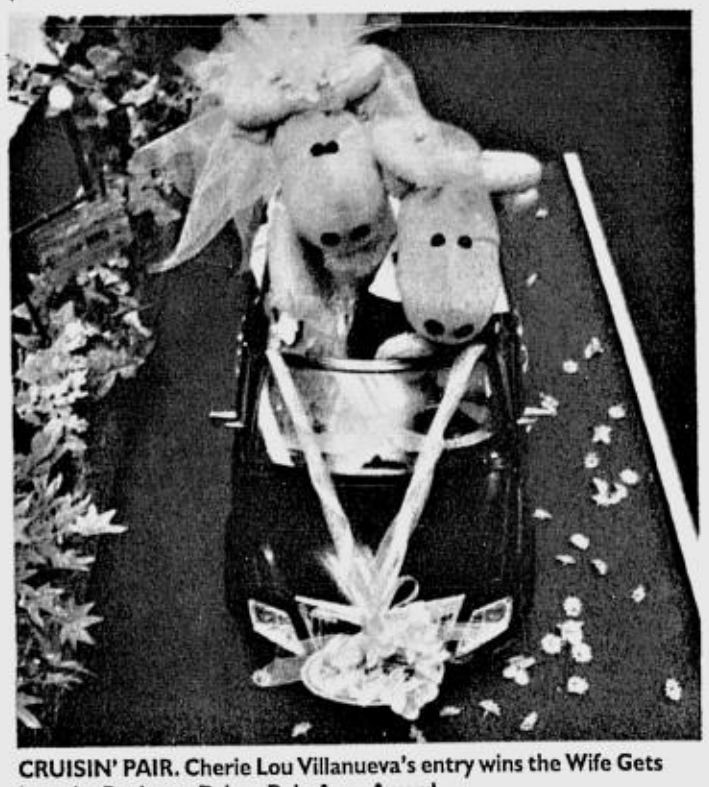
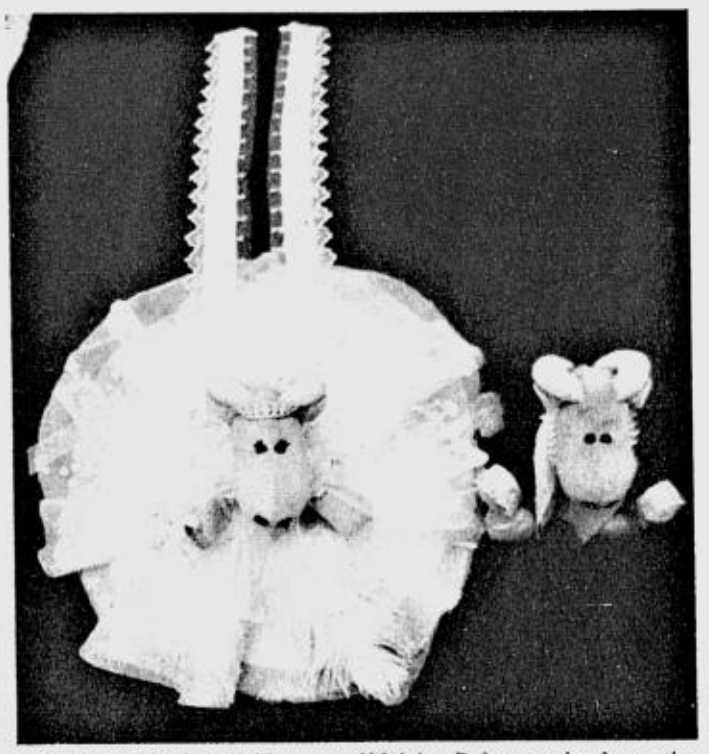


UNITY AWARD. Muslim wedding by Analiza Dizon Felix of Tandang Sora, QC



CRUISIN' PAIR. Cherie Lou Villanueva's entry wins the Wife Gets Into the Backseat Driver Role Asap Award.



TICKLED PINK. Joseph Meneses of Malolos, Bulacan, takes home the Look of Love Award.

ROMANCE IN PURPLE. By Michael Joseph Bawar of Valenzuela

GARDEN VOWS. By Olan Roque of Novaliches

SATIN SPLENDOR. By Nathaniel Julian of Dasmariñas, Cavite

Here comes Guyito, all dressed in white!

From page D1

tention to details when designing. The intricately beaded gown he made showed this. His mini-tableau included a bridal affair's musts, such as the rings, the veil, the cord, the invite, the coins. Pressed for time, he had to forego some aspects of the design, like the lighted cage where the mascots would have stood. "I didn't know the deadline was extended!" he laughingly said.

An engineering graduate who works at the Caloocan City Hall, the 40-year-old Del Mundo also took home the top plum for the Glamwear Category of the "Dress Up Your Kitty" contest held by Gift Gate several years ago. Like Gallon, he learned the craft from his own mother, who's a dressmaker. Del Mundo will take home P10,000.

Special prizes

The winners were chosen based on relevance to theme, creativity and originality. Pleased with the entries, the contest organizers asked the judges—Ms Prieto, INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Lifestyle editor Chelo Banal-Formoso, INQUIRER Publications Inc. president Dennis Valdes, INQUIRER VP for finance Luis Ymson Jr., designer Baddeo, artist and Wedding March event stylist Rachy Cuna, and lensman Chito Vecina of cbv7 Media Master—to name special awardees.

An abaca Maria Clara wins the grand prize

The Unity Award will be given to Analiza Dizon Felix of Quezon City for the Muslim wedding design.

The INQUIRER Award will go to Maria Gina de Dios of Manila for "using the INQUIRER the most"—literally. She rolled colored pages of the INQUIRER to create rosettes for her design; the groom wore pants and shirt made of recycled newspaper.

The Look of Love Award will go to the coordinated pink confection design of Joseph Meneses, who hails from Bulacan. The Wife Gets into the Backseat Driver Role Asap Award will go to Cherie Lou Villanueva of Manila, who crammed the bride and groom in a doll-sized limo, with the bride in the backseat, naturally.

Other finalists were Michael Joseph Bawar of Valenzuela; Paul Rubens Mendoza of Novaliches; Aileen Mae Enriquez of Parañaque; Malyn Coronel of Bulacan; Nathaniel Julian of Cavite; Olan Roque of Novaliches; Tristan Yap of Manila; and Darlene de Dios of Albay. All entries are on display until today at the Glorietta Activity Center.

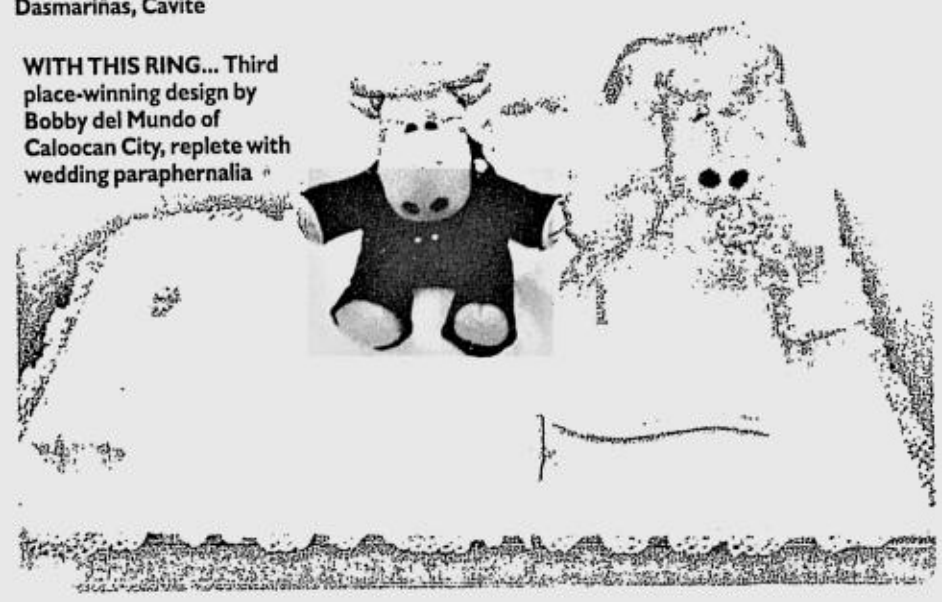
The award ceremonies, to be preceded by an acoustic concert featuring top musicians, will cap the bridal fair at 4 p.m.

E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

DREAM GOWN. Grand prize-winning entry by Junel Gallon of Tondo, Manila

NATION'S BEST. Would you mind getting hitched dressed in the country's No.1 newspaper? Maria Gina de Dios of Malate, Manila, wins the INQUIRER Award.

WHAT GOD HAS PUT TOGETHER... By Tristan Yap of Sta. Cruz, Manila



WITH THIS RING... Third place-winning design by Bobby del Mundo of Caloocan City, replete with wedding paraphernalia

Milestones

We're accepting announcements of weddings and engagements. Please send the following typewritten information: names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, gown designer and other related information. Readers can send sketches of gowns and pictures of the couple to the INQUIRER office, or P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City, or e-mail lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. This will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the sender.

GAYLON-YODICO

Julay Gaylon, son of **Mr.** and **Mrs. Valentin Gaylon**, exchanged vows with **Joy Yodico**, daughter of **Mr.** and **Mrs. Diego Yodico**, on Dec. 6, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in UP Village, Quezon City. Reception followed at the Bulwagang Claret.

CONTEMPRATO-MENDOZA

Leonides Contemprato exchanged vows with **Reliza Mendoza** on Dec. 28, in a garden wedding at the Mt. Sea Resort Hotel and Restaurant, Rosario, Cavite.

BRUAL-ALANO

Angel Brual, son of Dr. **Domingo** and Dr. **Lita Brual**, will marry **Sunsi Alano**, daughter of **Mr.** and **Mrs. Alex Alano**, on Jan. 14, at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati. Reception will follow at the Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The bridal gown was inspired by a European design. It is made of pure white duchess satin trimmed with French lace, embellished with caviar pearls and Swarovski crystals. **Cecilio Abad** executed the gown. The wedding motif is pink.

Allyn Baturacal is the wedding coordinator.

BORJA 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Adrian Borja and the former **Chloe Enriquez** will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary with a dinner-dance at the Garden Ballroom of the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel on Jan. 16.

Eric Pineda designed two gowns for the bride—a draped silver gray gown in dup-dyed chiffon with silver beadwork and crystals for the renewal of vows and an asymmetric fuchsia dress in shantung silk chiffon for the anniversary dance.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

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or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

The Haven for Street Children aims to give homeless kids a sense of normalcy in their turbulent lives

Sheltering the young and the helpless

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Romy Homillada

IT is when the afternoon sun slowly sinks into the glistening red-orange waters on Roxas Boulevard, another postcard-perfect day for many Manilans, that this little street boy's day begins.

Like the sun that bleeds into the sea, fusing night and day into a hazy glimmer in the horizon, Robin Ebañez's memory is muddled as he takes on life one fleeting day at a time.

He learned early on that the

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2 Closer — Josh Groban — keyword: brokenvow
3 The Chillout Project House Sessions — Various Artists — keyword: urdmusic
4 Dreamsounds — Various Artists
5 Akustik Natin — Various Artists — keyword: mrsuave
6 As Time Goes By — Rod Stewart
7 Michael Bublé — Michael Bublé
8 Perfectly Acoustic — Various Artists
9 Tunog Acoustic — Various Artists
10 Smile — Nina
11 It Had To Be You — Rod Stewart
12 Nice & Easy — Various Artists — keyword: closetou
13 Bigotilyo — Parokya Ni Edgar
14 In The Zone — Britney Spears — keyword: sposthatboom
15 AKA 2: Almost Kinda Acoustic 2 — Various Artists
16 Diary Of Alicia Keys — Alicia Keys
17 Nyoy Volante w/ Mannos — Nyoy Volante
18 Long Ago Tomorrow — Siobhan Pettit
19 Singles 1992-2003 — No Doubt — keyword: itsmylife
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21 Diva 2 Diva — Kuh Ledesma
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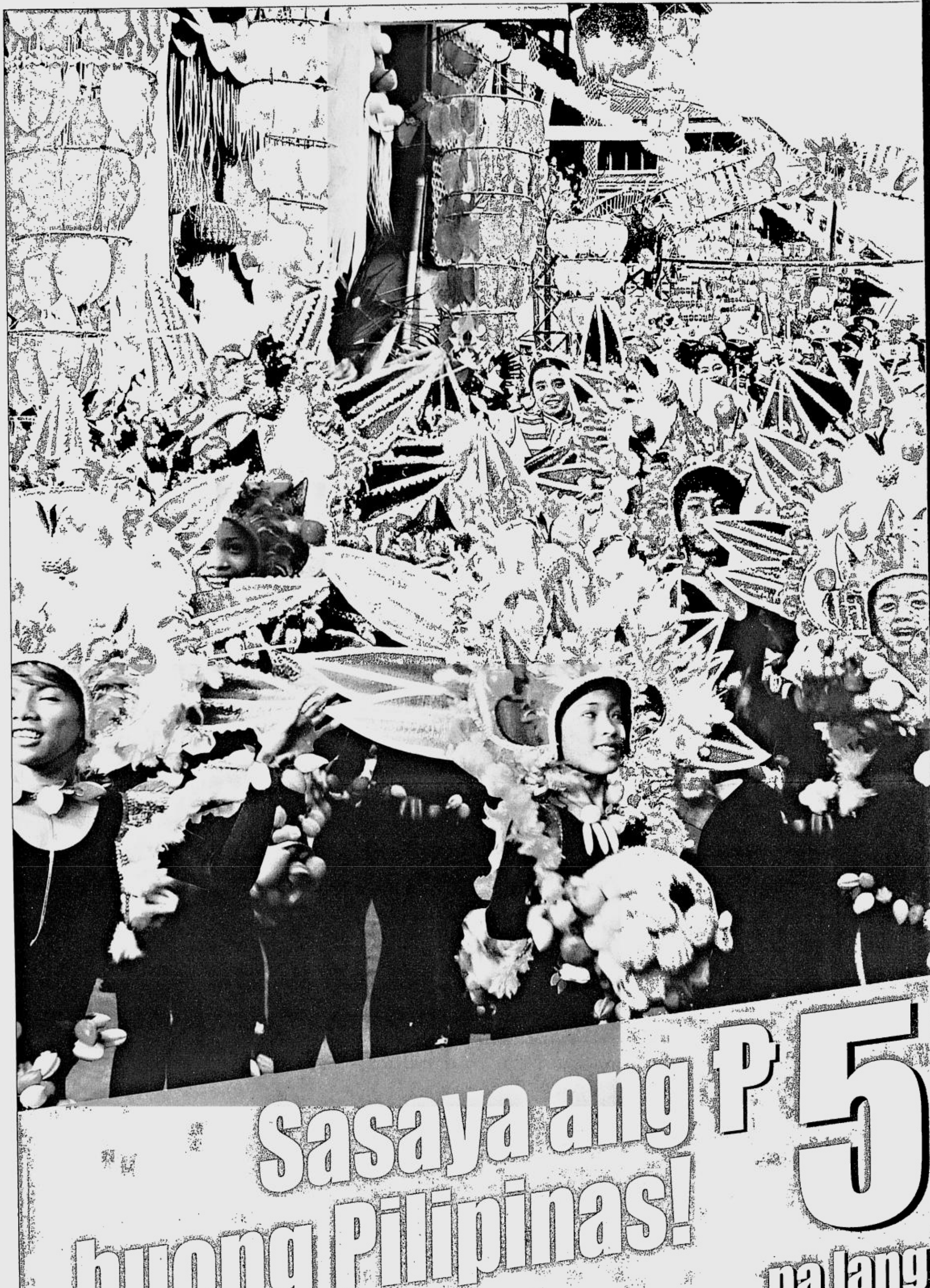

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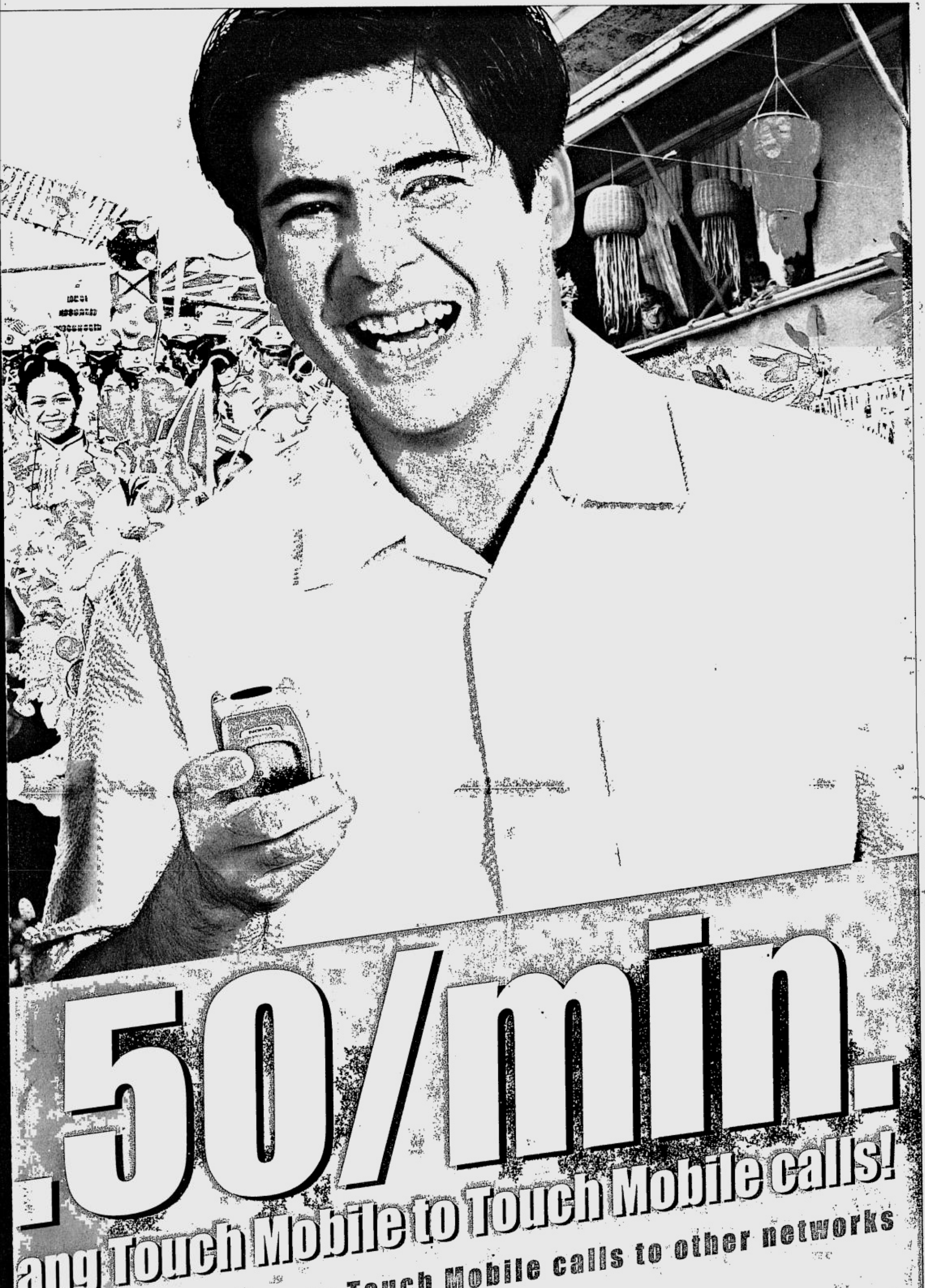

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Sheltering the young and the helpless

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From page E1

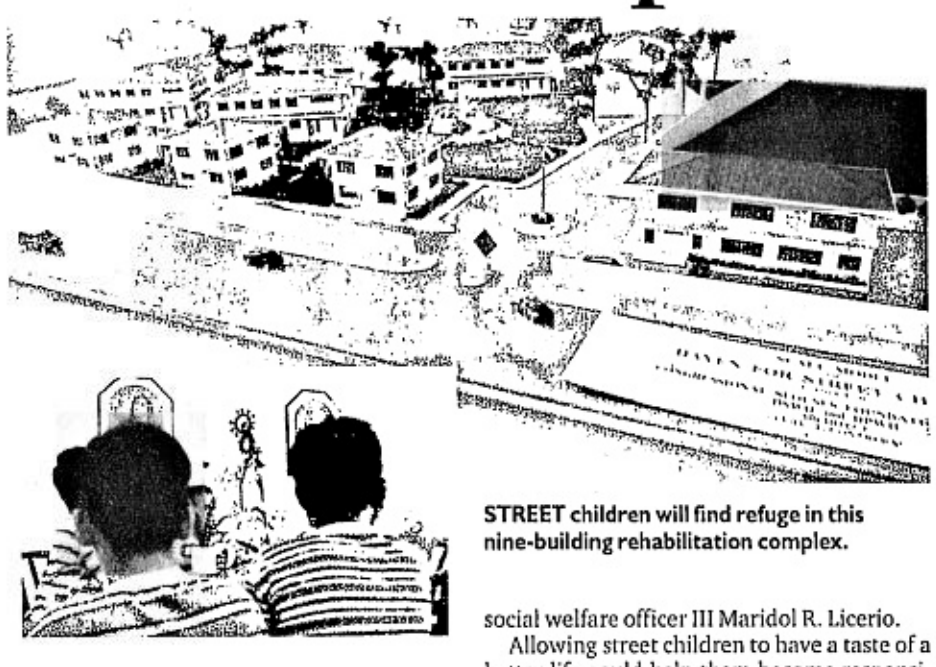
key to street survival is to think of the present, to aim only for his immediate need. Now 10, Ebañez may not remember how long he lived in the streets, but he recalls vividly what drove him to it—the death of his mother.

Cynical beyond his years, his guarded eyes become childlike when he speaks of his mother. But his is a bitter nostalgia: "*Sinasabi po n'ya sa akin parati na hindi n'ya ako iiwan. Bakit po s'ya namatay? Bakit po n'ya ako iniwanan?*"

Structured lifestyle

Nobody can answer his question, but The Haven for Street Children, the second project of the Congressional Spouse Foundation Inc. (CSFI) with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under its president/chair Gina P. de Venecia, aims to give young boys like Ebañez a sense of normalcy in their turbulent lives.

"We want to help them have a realization of the other side of reality," says the center's OIC, social welfare officer III Maridol R. Licerio.



STREET children will find refuge in this nine-building rehabilitation complex.

Allowing street children to have a taste of a better life could help them become responsible individuals upon their release, she says. When they become aware of their choices, there is a 50-75 percent chance of success.

The Haven for Street Children is a rehabilitation center for the "rugby" boys under 13 years old who have been taken to detoxification centers by the DSWD. The center will be the young lads' temporary home, with house parents to teach them hygiene and grooming and house cleaning and more, taking after a real Filipino household.

Hopefully, says Licerio, by living a structured lifestyle, the children will acquire productive habits and gain a sense of self-importance as well.

"We instill values, so there should be a support system like that of a family. There will also be counseling for the children and even seminars for their parents that will teach them parent effectiveness," she says.

The nine-building complex to be launched on Jan. 15 consists of four two-story residences that can accommodate a maximum of 65 children.

Emotional and physical rehab will be provided in the therapy center. There will also be a livelihood center, an administration building, a guidance center for parents and the Martin Nievera Recreation Center.

The biggest fund-raiser for the CSFI project was Nievera's concert last year, so the organization decided to name the multipurpose court in honor of the singer.

His two sons, Robin and Ram, with mom Pops Fernandez, will cut the ceremonial ribbon on Thursday. (Nievera is on a concert tour in the United States.)

Construction began with seed money from the Country Development Fund of House Speaker Jose de Venecia. Donations were also received from business and government sectors.

The CSFI handles the construction and furnishing of the center's buildings, while the DSWD takes charge of operations and maintenance. The center is located on Zapote Road, Alabang, Muntinlupa.

Phase II of women's center

Recently completed, too, was Phase II of The Haven for Women, CSFI's first rehab center that opened eight years for abused and battered women.

Aside from additional residences, Phase II will include an activity cottage with a library, group counseling room, audiovisual and music room, day-care cottage with classrooms, playrooms and feeding rooms.

For years now, social workers and in-house psychologists have known that for mothers and children to heal physically and emotionally faster, they should be kept together. More than 5,000 clients have since taken refuge in The Haven, and Phase II finally answers the need for keeping mothers and children together by constructing the Family Cottage.

Phase II will include a transition cottage and an ecumenical center for prayer and reflection. After the opening of Phase I in 1995, the CSFI put up women's desk in every police station in the country to encourage abused women to report to the authorities without fear of being shamed.

Siony Pangilinan is one of these women. Now 42, she had to have her six children confined in different rehab centers when she was brought to The Haven in 1997.

But while a number of her fellow clients at the center had nervous breakdowns and ended up in mental hospitals, Pangilinan conquered her demons.

Upon her release in 1999, she "earned" the right to get her children from the centers one by one and bring her family together once more. In fact, it was the thought of seeing her children again one day that kept her sanity.

Many of her friends, in fact, despite constant advice from social workers to do otherwise, went back to their abusive husbands. Pangilinan, however, stood her ground and vowed never to get back with her estranged spouse, a man who had the habit of chasing her naked on the streets to rape her whenever she refused his advances to have sex in the presence their children.

Today, many clients at The Haven look up to Pangilinan, who has since been teaching her children the same things she learned from the social workers—from daily household chores to moral values and self-esteem.

"*Paano yung anak mo kung bumibigay kang nanay? Maraming umaasa sa iyo kaya kailangan matatag ka*," she says.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

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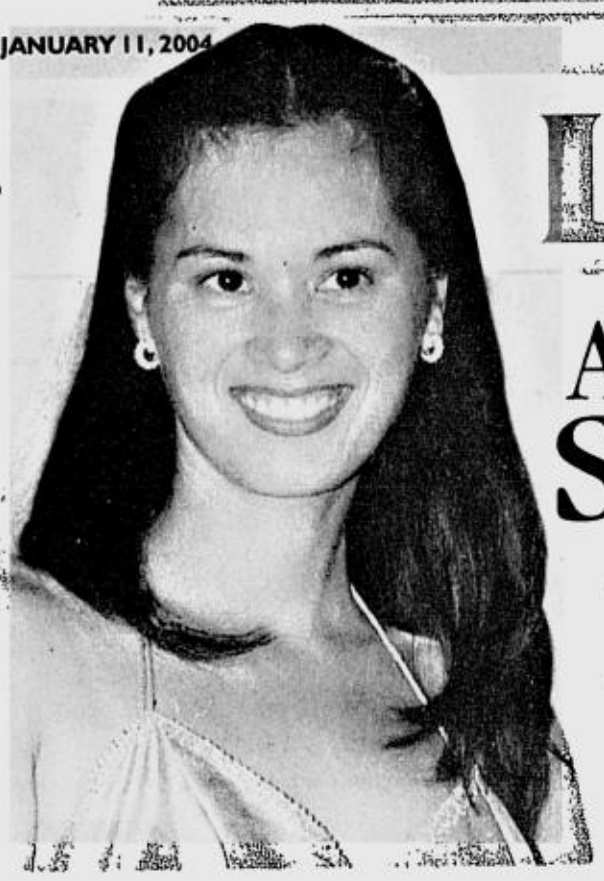

TRISHA Borromeo

An invincible summer

Out of the ugliness of pain and death comes the beauty of life

TRISHA and sister Mitzi bonding in a beach at night

By Mitzi Borromeo
Contributor

IT HAS been a year since my sister passed away. The reality of it all still seems so surreal: speaking of her in the past tense; thinking about how she's not around to bother and argue with, borrow clothes, shoes and bags from, complain about silly things—all the wonderful, crazy, trivial and serious things I took for granted.

The process of healing, I believe, is one of life's greatest journeys. From it, one relearns the value of patience.

Questions may remain unanswered, changes may take place as the world continues to spin on its axis. Life's mysteries will continue, beyond our lifetime. All I intend to do now is to try and make sense of it all. To seize life and savor every moment. This is what life with my sister has taught me.

We breathe with new energy as we try to make sense of the world. And as a very wise soul once told me: We live, we go on and most important of all, we love.

Real awakening

In the "Tibetan Book of Living and Dying," Sogyal Rinpoche writes that a close encounter with death can bring a real awakening, a transformation in our whole approach to life.

My perspective of the world has changed considerably in the past year, and it took pain to make me pay attention. I know there is still so much to learn, but I am more aware now.

Trisha's journey has served as a catalyst for my deeper plunge into self-discovery. With every death comes new life.

Trisha's journey has indeed breathed new life into us all. Wherever we are, there she shall be.

Every transition begins with an ending. I recently came across words by the psychiatrist and author Elisabeth Kübler Ross, which brought me back to my sister's trials, as well as those being experienced by so many others all over the world. Ross said: "The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."

Blessed

Sometimes we are blessed to be able to hear the stories of people who have suffered. However, we can only acknowledge how little we really know of the experiences. So we treat them with kindness and respect.

If you are going through a difficult time in your life, or if you have a loved one who is suffering, hold on to the thought that no matter how awful the situation may be, good will eventually come from it if you can open yourself to

AN INVINCIBLE/ F2

A HIPPIE Mitzi with Trisha in a hula skirt

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INDOMITABLE. Trisha Borromeo, radiant in her prime

Keep the door to life open

By Maloy Panlilio-Chua
Contributor

I MISS Trisha. My mind will suddenly be filled with thoughts of her in the middle of a conversation, at work, in the mall, or during quiet moments.

Up to now, when my sisters Myrna or Teng talk about her, or Sammi, Myrna's granddaughter, asks about her, I get teary eyed.

Children, even nieces and nephews, are an extension of your being.

After I lost my son Robbie a few years ago, I thought I could handle any emotional upheaval. But when Trisha was diagnosed with cancer, I found out I was wrong.

Trisha once asked me why God did not spare her from sickness since He had already taken Robbie away. I could not answer her.

> I take continuous joy in recognizing the extension of the spirit of those who have gone ahead into our lives

It was the start of a journey as we, her relatives and friends, accompanied Trisha toward home.

Our love for her tied us together in a bond that only we can understand. Emily Bronte wrote before she died at age 30, "No coward soul is mine... no trembler in the world's storm troubled sphere."

Our journey has given us an inner awareness that Trisha had lived courageously.

Of course, we had bad moments. Fear, doubt, anger and despair were in the background of our existence during those 22 months.

But it was Trisha's indomitable courage that sustained us all the time. She refused cancer to get her. She always emphasized, "I may have cancer, but cancer does not have me."

Life goes on, change is the order of life. The world will still revolve no matter what.

I would sometimes miss a step when I see a tall, lithe woman pass me by. I still hug Trisha's favorite bag that I often use or imagine her walking with me as I wear her sandals. I try to learn the nursery rhymes she used to sing to Sammi.

Keep the door to her life open. These are words I once read from Edith Fogg Hickman. For those of us who have experienced grief, the mere mention of a loved one who has died hurts.

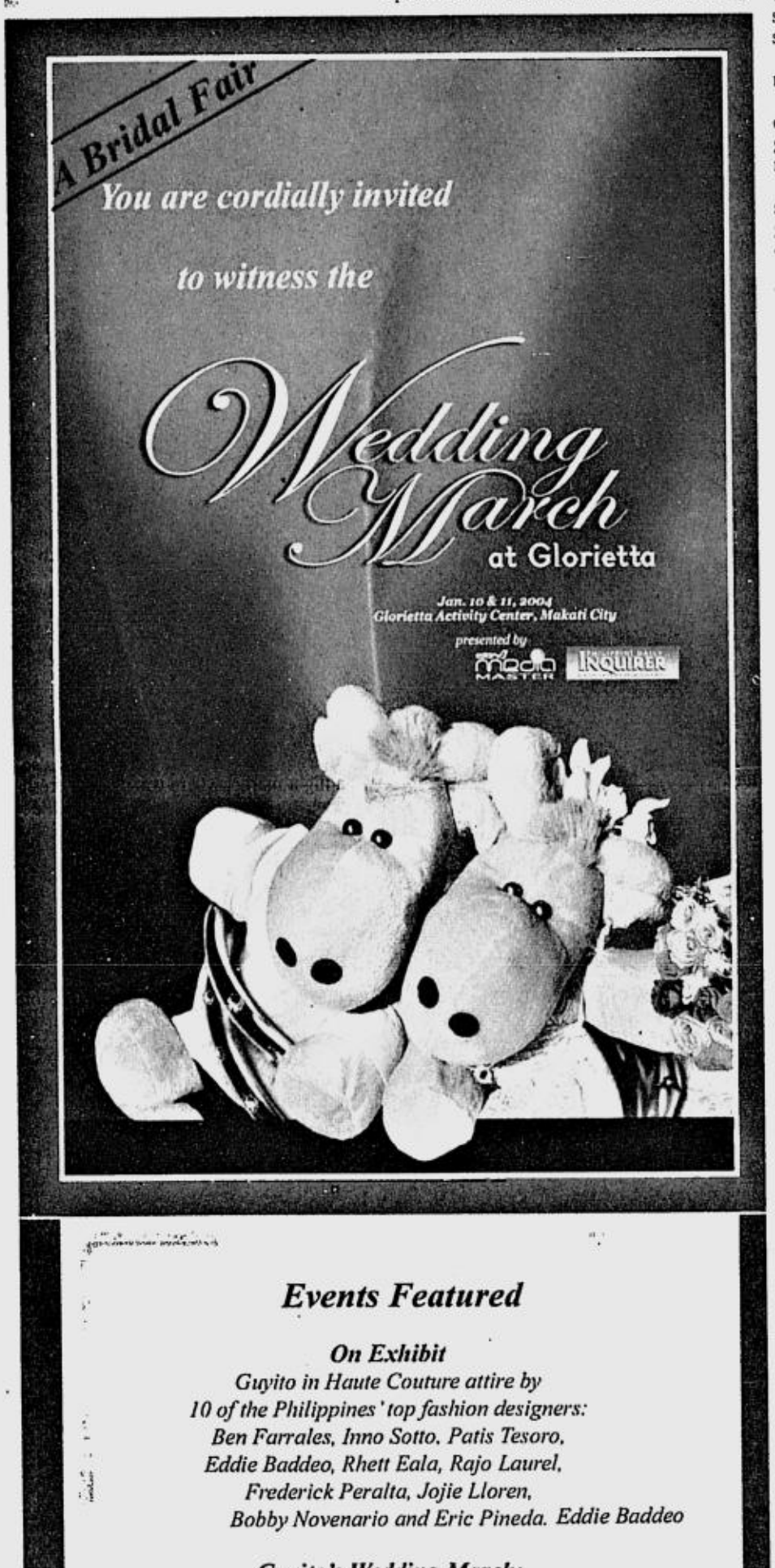
Though Trisha is gone, the sense of her presence is not. Like the way I deal with my son's death, I take continuous joy not only in reminiscing about the past but also in acknowledging the extension of their spirit into our present lives.

The author is the sister of Trisha's mother, Myrna Borromeo.

TRISHA and the author, her mom Myrna's sister and confidante

WITH their mommy carrying newborn granddaughter Samantha

WITH cousin Nicole Fonacier, her mom and Tita Teng Fonacier



Events Featured

On Exhibit
Guyito in Haute Couture attire by
10 of the Philippines' top fashion designers:
Ben Farrales, Inno Sotto, Patis Tesoro,
Eddie Baddeo, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel,
Frederick Peralta, Jojie Lloren,
Bobby Novenario and Eric Pineda. Eddie Baddeo

Guyito's Wedding March:
Dress Up Guyito Contest
Announcement of winners and
display of entries of aspiring amateur designers
who have dressed up Guyito, the official Inquirer mascot,
in wedding ensembles.

Wedding Fair
Showcasing the country's
best wedding suppliers to give special packages
to registered guest couples of the event

Acoustic Night
A free concert featuring some of the country's
best acoustic performers

Raffle Draws
A special treat to participating exhibitors and
registered guest couples of the event

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26 Dancer Charisse
27 Turnkey
28 Parka part
29 Ma's instrument
31 Glad
32 Hot spot?
35 Mombasa's land
36 Pro foe
39 Cal. page
40 Click and clang
42 Strutting dance?
47 Ethnic
49 French connections?
52 Tiny colonist
53 Debated
55 Kind of kiln
56 HS exam
57 Less long-winded
58 Bete noire
59 Like twilight
60 Absorb, with "up"
63 Boxing expert Fleischer
64 Rueful cry
66 More unfeeling
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91 Kitten's comment
92 Reserved
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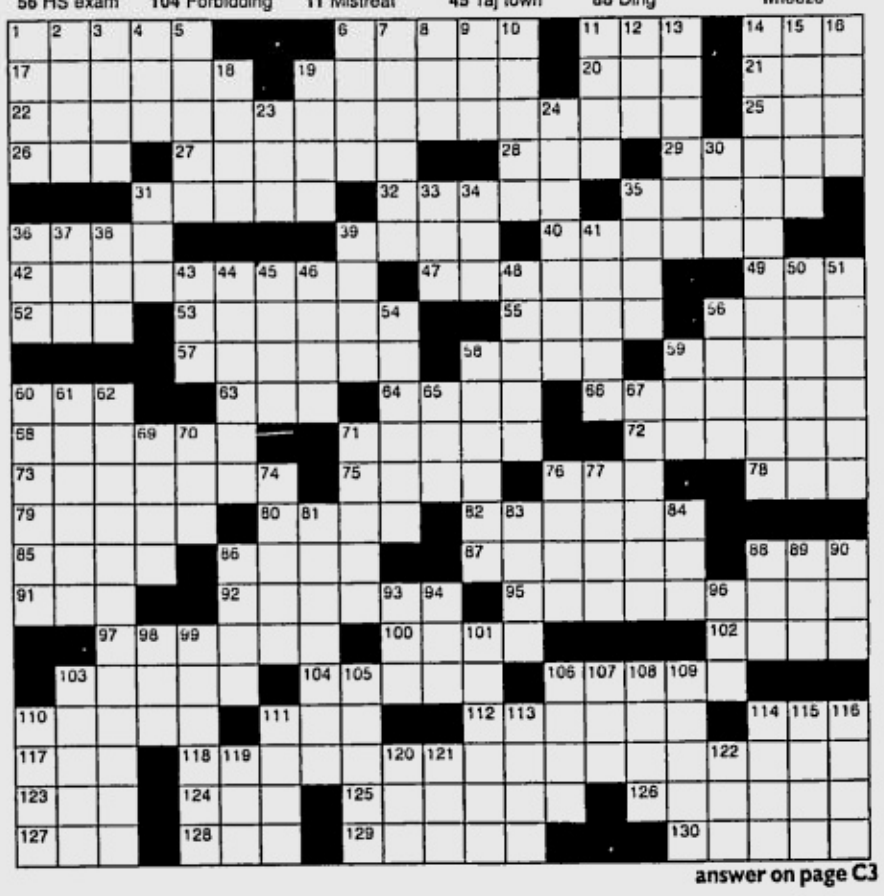
97 Slip by
100 Nest eggs
102 Buffalo waterfront
103 Despots
104 Forbidding
106 Goatish gamboler
110 LuPone or LaBelle
111 From — Z
112 Tuneful Twain
114 AAA handout
117 Suffix with "glob"
118 Have a youthful fling?
123 "— favor"
124 Doe in "Bambi"
125 Take into custody
126 Proclamations
127 Lee or Landers
128 For instance
129 Retreats
130 February forecast

DOWN
1 Coll. brass
2 Pale
3 Conked out, as an engine
4 Rainbow shape
5 Sangria wine
6 Showed up
7 Opposed
8 — Tin Tin
9 Word with on or off
10 — grinder
11 Mistreat
12 TV's "— Fly Away"
13 March baby, maybe
14 Jazz musicians' gathering?
15 Writer Rogers St. Johns
16 Pro — (free)
18 Break suddenly
19 Like a coyote
23 Short swim
24 Mashad man
30 Compass pt.
31 Wasn't it?
33 Spring mo.
34 Hagen of "Reversal of Fortune"
35 "Braveheart" costume
36 Atty.'s org.
37 "Sister Act" extra
38 Explosive initials
39 — -Ball (arcade game)
41 Desert refuges
43 Make a doily
44 Plumber's tool
45 Taj town
46 A deadly sin
48 Use a toboggan
50 Start liking
51 "Sophie's Choice" author
54 Entice
55 Propel with a pole
58 Sentimental song
59 Giovanni or Knotts
60 Islamic greeting
61 Threat words
62 Sergio Leone genre?
65 Where rams romp
67 Morsel
69 Blessing
70 "— been ages!"
71 Stage stuff
74 Joyce Carol —
76 Marineland performer
77 "The Green —" ('56 song)
81 California city
83 Digs in
84 Catchall abbr.
86 Snake charmer's crew
88 Ding
89 Meyers of "Kate & Allie"
90 Nice time of year
93 Bind
94 Be human
96 "And I Love —" ('64 hit)
98 Geog. abbr.
99 Greets Eos
101 Response
103 Hook on a hawk
105 Like some music
106 It's good in a pinch
107 Clause connector
108 Buster Brown's dog
109 Football gains
110 Insect stage
111 Out of town
113 Greet the villain
114 Pixie and Dixie, for two
115 Poker stake
116 "Yo!" at the library
119 "Sat — tuffet . . ."
120 Precambrian —
121 Lanka lead-in
122 Sneeze and wheeze



answer on page C3

An . . .

From page F1

God's love and the love of those around you.

We must be gentle with ourselves—it may take a long time to be "whole" again after experiencing pain, but it is this very pain and suffering that brings us closer to self-discovery and molds us into better, more beautiful people.

To borrow from the Dalai Lama's wise words, life becomes useful when you confront a difficulty; to confront and overcome it provides value to your life. That challenge allows you to practice your ability.

Basically, the purpose of life is to serve other people. From that point of view, a difficulty is really a great opportunity.

In the midst of our pain or the pain of others, we must always remember that beautiful people don't just happen.

And when you are blessed to meet one of those "beautiful people," never feel envious or inadequate. Remember they, too, have suffered. Ask to hear their story. You will be more beautiful as a result.

I think Albert Camus' words sum up this "beauty" perfectly: "In the midst of winter I found there was within me an invincible summer. May we all discover the invincible summer within."

The author is the younger sister of Trisha Borromeo, a preschool teacher who also dabbled in modeling. Trisha passed away Jan. 8, 2003.

TRAVEL

Editor Rosario A. Garcellano

Refreshing Negros

Text and photos by Joel V. Nigos

THOUGH trips to the provinces are a welcome change for people like myself who have become weary of city life, I came to Negros Oriental without much expectations. But the break left me refreshed, and amazed at what I experienced there.

Known for its vast sugar cane plantations in haciendas where trains still run on ancient rails, the province offers visitors distinctive rock formations, rich corals and other marine creatures, clear waters and pristine white-sand beaches, stone crafts, a rich history as reflected in centuries-old structures, as well as modern facilities in the city proper.

At Apo Island, said to be the country's first and one of Asia's most successful marine sanctuaries, we found a rich variety of corals, anemones, clownfish, groupers, jacks, snappers, surgeonfish and giant clams. Of about 300 species of corals in the world, 280 are found in Apo—a magnificent spectacle for divers and an internationally famous site for scuba diving and snorkeling.

The number of divers in the reefs is controlled at 15 per day. During our visit, Canadian, Japanese, German and Dutch nationals were enjoying the clear aquamarine waters.

The island, with its unique rock formations and white-sand beaches, has been declared a natural park, and its coral reefs have been protected and extensively studied since the 1970s at the marine laboratory run by Silliman University.

Walking through Apo Island's quaint village on the way to the marine sanctuary, we noticed how waste segregation is being religiously practiced. Clearly marked garbage bins are everywhere. There are also a school and a church for the island's population of about 800.

Motorboats take visitors to Apo from any of several take-off points. Though Malatapay is the most popular such point, we set off from the Atlantis Dive Resort in Dauin on board a private motorized outrigger large enough to hold 20 persons. The trip to the island usually takes 45 minutes.

The village of Malatapay is in the town of Zamboangita, where an open-air market is held every Wednesday. It is said to be one of the liveliest events in the region where one can buy anything from homegrown fruits and vegetables, fish, household items, hand-woven mats, native bags, toothbrushes and pirated VCDs to swine, cows and water buffalo.

The sun had set when we returned to Atlantis. At the famous Lab-as Restaurant, where fresh crabs, oysters and other native specialties are served for dinner, we became acquainted with members of the Philippine Tour Operators Association, their local counterparts and tour guides.

The next day, a tour of the capital city of Dumaguete took us to Silliman University.

Well known for the writers' workshop conducted annually by the writing Tiempos, Silliman was founded by American Presbyterian missionaries in 1901 and is the first university outside Manila as well as the first Protestant school in the country. The 35-hectare campus, which is adorned by century-old acacia trees, has been declared a bird sanctuary.

The oldest building's "Gates of Opportunity" facing Rizal Boulevard may very well be the university's symbol.

It has an Ethno-Anthropological Museum, and its library, which has an extensive Filipiniana section, houses 175,000 volumes and modern facilities that include a multimedia center and a cyber-library with 80 terminals for use by students.

Silliman also hosts one of the country's most extensive American colonial architecture. Its modern and fully equipped marine laboratory has live organisms on display and a collection of marine specimens including the second largest collection of marine mammal bones in the world. There are breeding areas for groupers and crocodiles, and giant clams are cultured in water tanks.

Delightful Dumaguete is dubbed as the "City of Gentle People," a fitting compliment to the unhurried lifestyle of its residents. Its attractions include the Cathedral Bell Tower, a busy public market, pottery and weaving cooperatives for the handcrafted piña cloth, and the Ecological Park and Aviary, which has become a model dump site.

Centuries ago, the Bell Tower served to warn natives of attacking Moro pirates. The original structure still exists, a beacon to visitors and strangers alike.

In the town of Bacong south of Dumaguete is the Negros Oriental Arts and Heritage, which houses a stone craft factory and a showroom. Also in Bacong is the oldest church in the province, with its intact belfry facing the sea and a century-old pipe organ displayed inside.

Driving southwest and upland on the tree-lined highway, we reached the Forest Camp in Apolong, Valencia. It is a cool and lush camp site with a hanging bridge and a tree house and natural and man-made springs and pools set amid a forest setting.

The Twin Lakes of Balinsasayao and Danao, located 20 kilometers west of the municipality of Sibulan, are 1,000 meters above sea level. These two inland bodies of water amid thick forests are ideal for kayaking, canoeing, boating and fishing.

With funding from the Negros Oriental provincial government and the Department of Tourism, the lakes are now being developed into a national park.

We stayed overnight at the Bahia-Days Hotel in Bais, north of Sibulan, anticipating the experience of dolphin-watching.

The next day, both thrilled and anxious, we proceeded to Port Capiñahan in Bais where the boat that would take us to Tañon Strait was waiting.

The 1,650-foot-deep strait between the island of Negros and Cebu is where 13 species of dolphins (including the spotter, spinner and bottle nose) can be seen, we were told. The trip there usually takes an hour.

BEAUTY at one's touch: unique rock formation and white-sand beach

HANGING bridge at Forest Camp

A few minutes after we set out for the open sea, it started to drizzle.

We stopped at the 218-hectare Talabong Island Mangrove Forest. The area used to be the home of wild ducks and monkeys, but the animals have since abandoned it. The bamboo boardwalk is also gone, having been replaced by a cement counterpart.

We first saw dolphins leaping out of the water from a distance. Later, after much clapping and whistling on our part, they came close (very close). Some even managed to do a show for us!

The Campuyo White Sand Bar proved to be another surprise. Stretching to a couple of kilometers, it is where sea waters coming from various directions merge. Imagine yourself stretched out on the sand, with the currents serving as a natural massage.

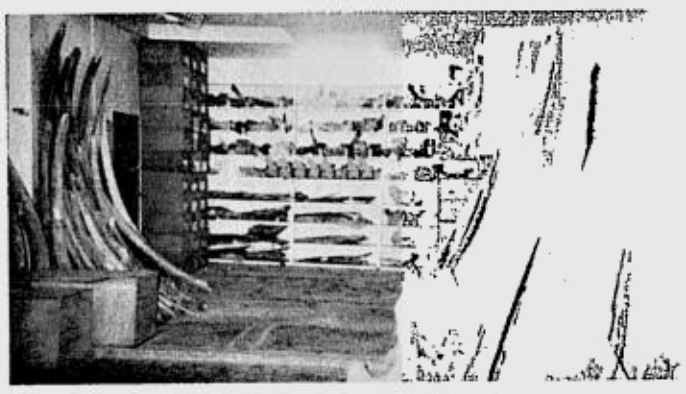
In Tanjay south of Bais, the townsfolk converge at the city plaza every Friday night for ballroom dancing. There's also a night market where you can buy fresh fruits and vegetables aside from a wide array of goods.

We spent our last night in Negros Oriental at the Baybayon Beach Resort in Cangmating, Sibulan. The next morning, we drove back to Dumaguete for a quick trip to Rizal Boulevard.

The boulevard is a favorite retreat of the city folk. It is where they jog, take leisurely walks, gather for picnics, or simply relax and enjoy the sea breeze.

It has a place in history, too: National hero Jose Rizal was said to have strolled along its 780-meter stretch during a stopover on his way to Manila from Dapitan.

It is lined by fine restaurants and hotels, like the Coco Amigos, Bethel Guest House and La Residencia Al Mar. At the far end is the city port where ferry boats take passengers to the nearby island provinces of Cebu, Bohol and Siquijor.



PART of Silliman University's Marine Museum, which holds the world's second largest collection of marine mammal bones

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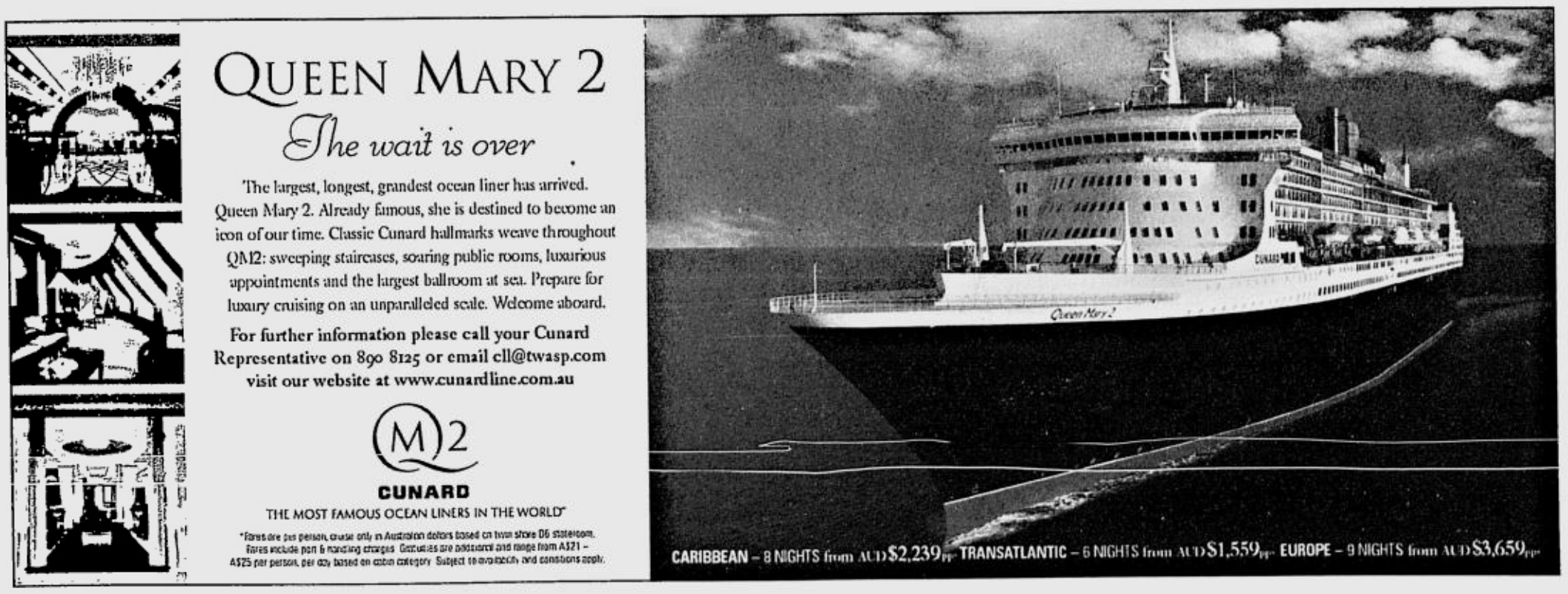

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SPECIAL PROJECT COORDINATORS Code: (SPC)
- Graduates of Marketing, Mass Communication, Communication Arts and other related courses
- Male/Female, 20-28 yrs. old
- Can handle pressure
- With experience in project management, event management, promo management and production-related projects

CUSTOMER RELATIONS COORDINATORS Code: (CRC)
- Graduates of communications-related courses
- Male/Female, 20-28 yrs. old
- With excellent communication skills
- Preferably with experience in linkages and customer contact services

MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES Code: (MR)
- College graduates, preferably with medically allied degrees who will be trained for professional detailing
- Male / Female, 20-30 yrs. old
- With excellent communication skills
- Willing to be assigned within Metro Manila or provincial areas

NURSES Code: (N)
- Registered nurses or Nursing graduates who will be trained for consumer education programs
- Female, 20-28 yrs. old
- With excellent communication skills
- Flexible, with pleasing personality

PROGRAM FACILITATORS Code: (PF)
- Graduates of Marketing, Mass Communication, Communication Arts and other related courses
- Female, 21-28 yrs. old
- Can handle pressure
- With experience in group facilitation for special projects or activations
- With excellent communication skills

PRODUCT ENDORSERS Code: (PE)
- High-school graduates or college students
- Male/Female, 20-25 yrs. old
- With pleasing personality
- With excellent customer service skills
- Willing to be assigned on field

MERCHANDISERS Code: (M)
- At least High-school graduates, willing to be assigned on field to work on merchandising activations
- Male, 20-30 yrs. old
- Physically fit
- Flexible, good communication skills

Interested applicants may personally bring, fax or e-mail their resumes with 2x2 photos and other credentials to: Unit 4E I-C Cypress Gardens, 112 V.A. Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City starting Monday January 12, from 8 am to 4 pm. Tel No. 812-7108 loc. 1402; 1505 • Fax 818-1343 email: recruitment@mmc.ph

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Qualifying Test: Jan. 17, 2004
Last Date of Applications: Jan. 16, 2004
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Visit NIIT now! TAFT Mezzanine Level, Joshua Ctr 428 Taft Ave (fronting PGH) 405-0018. ALABANG 2/F Doña Marta Bldg, Alabang Zapoter Rd (fronting Isuzu) 775-7001. MAKATI. L/GF Salustiana Ty Bldg , Paseo de Roxas cor Perea St (near Greenbelt) 830-3000 ORTIGAS G/F Greenrich Mansion, Pearl Drive cor Lourdes St, Ortigas Center (Behind Richmonde Hotel) 689-1189

BOOKKEEPER/ ACCOUNTING CLERK

- Accounting graduate
- Computer literate
- Preferably with experience
- Hardworking and willing to work on extended hours.

Applicants may apply in person with resumé and 2x2 photo at:

UNIT 3303 ANTEL GLOBAL CORPORATE CENTRE
Doña Julia Vargas, Ortigas Center
Pasig City

IMMEDIATE HIRING:

LUMI-GLOW PHILIPPINES, INC.
Manufacturer of Luminous Safety & Informative & Outdoor Signs

SALES EXECUTIVES

- College graduate
- 21-30 years of age
- 2 years Sales Experience is a MUST

SEND RESUMÉ TO:
Lumi-Glow Phils., Inc.
Ground Floor, LRT CentralTerminal
Arroceros St., Manila
521-3339 / 526-0075

ICT GROUP

professionalism

excellence...

ICT GROUP is a leading globally integrated supplier of customer relationship management (CRM) solutions. We provide a comprehensive suite of sales, service and marketing solutions designed to help clients identify, acquire, retain, service, measure and maximize the lifetime value of their customer relationships.

More than 11,000 ICT GROUP employees at nearly 50 contact centers in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Mexico, the Caribbean and the Philippines support multinational corporations and institutions, primarily in the financial services, insurance, telecommunications, healthcare, information technology, media, energy and hospitality industries.

In the Philippines, ICT Group has been noted as one of the fast-growing call centers in Manila giving opportunities to individuals who are comfortable with technology and committed to client satisfaction and total quality.

Customer Service Representative

Responsibilities:

- **Acts as front-line contact with customers by telephonic communications**
- **Receives and responds to problems, queries, and requests of the customer**
- **Ensures customer satisfaction**

Requirements:

1. **Financial Account**
   - **Preferably with experience in a mortgage or financial account**
2. **Sales Account**
   - **Preferably with experience in sales and telemarketing**

Qualifications:

- **Bachelor's/College Degree**
- **Excellent communication skills in conversational English**
- **Active listening skills**
- **Strong interpersonal skills to work with the customers and with the team**
- **Willing to work on nighttime shifting schedules**
- **Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply**

team spirit...

ICT GROUP has been recognized for the following prestigious awards:

B2100 FAST 50 CUSTOMER WITH HEART FORTUNE 2002 Forbes 2001

Interested applicants may send their resume to recruitingmanila@ictgroup.com or visit us at the 19th Floor, Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue corner Senator Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

TeleTech

Your Customer Management Partner

TeleTech, the leading provider in global customer care solutions for over 20 years is seeking an exceptional Information Technology Professional for our Regional Operation. With global infrastructure support, our operations service a broad range of North American clients. The depth of the organization offers the right person the potential to learn, develop, and advance their career.

NETWORK (NOC) ENGINEER

This strategic role is responsible for day-to-day support of the Teletech Global network consisting primarily of Cisco networking equipment and Avaya VoIP. The NOC Engineer will also interface with internal and external customers and use network management tools such as HP Openview NNM, CiscoWorks, NetScout nGenius, NAI Sniffer, Cisco IDS, and Cisco WAN Manager to troubleshoot and resolve network related problems. Position will interact with server and application technology groups to resolve issues. NOC is staffed 24x7 and on-call/weekend rotations are required.

Essential requirements for this role include:

- College degree in Computer Engineering, Information Technology, or any related field
- With at least 2 years hands-on experience with Cisco routers and switches in a WAN environment
- With experience with management tools such as HP Openview NNM, Cisco Works, and NAI Sniffer
- With at least 2 years experience in handling Microsoft NT/2000, Citrix Metaframe and Unix servers
- Understanding of EIGRP routing protocol
- Proven history of process oriented troubleshooting
- Good documentation skills using Visio preferred
- Excellent customer service and communication skills

This position offers attractive remuneration and incentives commensurate with your experience.

Interested applicants are requested to send in their applications to:

MS. ROSALINA HALILI
Office Manager
TeleTech Customer Care Management Philippines, Inc.
P.O. Box 1786 MCPO Makati City, Philippines

Or thru email: it_jobs@ph.teletech.com

TeleTech

Your Customer Management Partner

Needs You!

We are looking for

Customer Service Representatives

to be part of our fast-growing team!

Join our team! We are having an OPEN HOUSE RECRUITMENT From January 12 to 16, 2004 9AM to 12NN and 1PM to 3PM at the 4th floor of the NEW WORLD RENNAISSANCE HOTEL Boardroom 7 and 8, Makati City

please bring a copy of your resume and one photo. We offer attractive renumeration commensurate with your experience

TeleTech, the world leader in the provision of call center solutions is currently undergoing an exciting period of growth in our offices within the Philippines. We're currently on the look out for new talent to work in our world class call centers who have strong command of the English language, are customer service focused, are analytical and solutions focused, are knowledgeable on PC architecture and applications, have excellent reasoning ability, and are able to interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions and are able to deal with abstract and concrete variables. If you are keen to progress your career with a global company then we want to talk to you! Dealing with callers from all over the United States, you will use your technical support skills to assist customers with their queries. If you have these skills and are available to work night shift, then apply in person at our Open House Week.

visit us at www.teletech.com

MARKETING PERSONNEL

- Male or Female, not more than 30 yrs. old
- Graduate of any 4 yrs. course preferably Marketing major.

DELIVERY PERSONNEL

- Male, not more than 30 yrs. old
- At least High School graduate

DRIVER

- At least High School graduate
- Male, not more than 35 yrs. old
- Preferably w/ experience

FACTORY WORKER

- Male, not more than 30 yrs. old
- At least High School graduate

APPLY IN PERSON & BRING RECENT 2X2 PICTURE AT:

TRINITY MARKETING, INC.
496 NUEVA ST., BINONDO, MANILA
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Bring a copy of your resumé at
SUITE 502
HOUSING PROFESSIONALS, INC.
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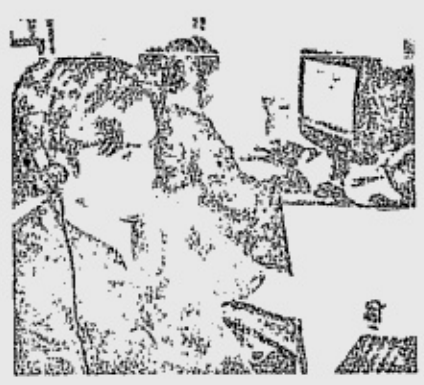
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

ICT GROUP



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Office Manager
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FACTORY WORKER

- Male, not more than 30 yrs. old
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APPLY IN PERSON & BRING RECENT 2X2 PICTURE AT.

TRINITY MARKETING, INC.
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Ortigas Center, Pasig City

SM

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Dasmariñas, Batangas & Metro Manila branches

Candidate for the position should have the following competencies:

- ☑ excellent communications skills
- ☑ can relate well with all levels of the organization
- ☑ Proficient in computer software applications
- ☑ team-player, goal-oriented and able to work well under pressure
- ☑ willing to grow with the organization willing to work on weekends and holidays

Interested parties may send their comprehensive resumé with recent photo to:

SM Shoemart
SM Corporate Office
Bldg. D 1000 Bay Boulevard,
SM Central Business Park
Bay City, Pasay City
or
Visit our website : www.sm-shoemart.com
E-mail: Recruit.SM.HO@sm-shoemart.com

(Please bring Bio-data, 3 pcs. 2x2 colored picture with white background, SSS Number and photocopy of your Transcript of records and Diploma together with the original copy)

OPERATIONS GROUP

Building Administration Manager

- graduate of Business Administration, Mechanical or Electrical Engineering
- with at least 2 years work experience in property management and building administration in the same capacity
- able to lead group and prioritize work load to meet deadlines

Customer Service Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4 year business course
- with pleasing personality and can handle customer concerns and complaints effectively
- with at least 1 to 2 years experience in customer service

Selling Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least 1 to 2 years experience in retail operations, food chain or in sales in the same capacity
- personable and can handle customer concerns and complaints effectively

Counter & Checking Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least 1 year experience in credit card transaction in the same capacity
- flexible and can handle customer concerns and complaints effectively

Warehouse Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with intensive experience in warehousing and other related functions preferably in retail business
- able to lead and motivate staff and foster a team working environment

Customer Relations Service Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of Criminology or any 4-year business course
- male, must be 5'5 1/2 in height or female, 5'2 in height
- with at least 1 year related work experience
- flexible to different work assignments and willing to be assigned in provincial branches
- must be physically fit and willing to work on extended hours
- with at least 1 year related work experience

SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

Treasury Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least 2 years supervisory experience in accounting, funds management or treasury functions
- familiar with banking operations & Central Bank procedures

SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

Certified Public Accountant

• Manager • Officer • Supervisor

- with at least 2 years work experience in all accounting operations in the same capacity

Advertising & Promotion Coordinator

- graduate of any 4 year business course
- with at least 1 to 2 years experience in advertising
- must be creative and with good fashion sense
- good verbal and written communication skills required

Engineer

• Mechanical • Civil • Electrical

- preferably licensed
- with at least 1 years work experience in construction project or mall operations is an advantage

Design Officer

- graduate of Architecture; preferably licensed
- knowledge in AutoCADD application

Display Officer

- graduate of Fine Arts, or any 4-year related course
- with at least 1 year experience in visual merchandising, windows display in a retail business
- computer literate (Adobe Photoshop, CorelDraw, PrintShop)

Training Officer / Trainer

- graduate of Education, Psychology, Behavioral Science or any 4-year business course
- with at least 2 years related work experience
- knowledgeable in the conduct of training needs analysis, design, implementation and evaluation of training programs and activities related to behavior and skills of employees

Nurse

- must be a Registered Nurse
- with at least two (2) years experience in industrial or hospital set-up
- able to establish rapport and deal with all levels of the organization
- willing to work on shift schedules or extended hours

Computer Operator/ Technician

- graduate of Computer Science / Engineering
- preferably with experience in the repair, trouble shooting and maintenance of cash registers

Office Assistant

(Human Resources • Accounting • Treasury • Cusomer Service)

- graduate of Psychology, Behavioral Science, Communication Arts, Business Management, Accountancy or Computer Science
- personable, fast learner and willing to work on extended hours

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global stride

changing the face of customer care

Globalstride is a premier outsourced customer service solutions provider whose vision is to be the leading customer care provider in the world. We hire the best and brightest Customer Care Specialists to handle voice services, email response and live chat.

CUSTOMER CARE SPECIALISTS (Part-time/Full-time)

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Offer products and services through the telephone and other specified means of communications to a targeted list of customers in behalf of our international clients to generate awareness of the products/services being offered.
- Provide necessary information about the products and services
- Document all pertinent customer data using client-prescribed forms
- Meet the productivity requirements of clients on qualified calls.

JOB REQUIREMENTS:
- Graduate of any four-year course
- With excellent interpersonal and communication skills in English using proper American grammar, diction, intonation, inflection and articulation.

ADVANTAGES:
- Previous experience in customer relations management, sales or marketing
- Ability to speak any foreign language (Spanish, Canadian French, Chinese, etc...)

MEDICAL LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS (Full-time)

JOB RESPONSIBILITES:
- Transcribe, format and proofread medical reports coming from US doctors
- Work well independently while meeting team targets for productivity and accuracy

JOB REQUIREMENTS:
- Background in the allied medical field (Nursing, PT, OT, MedTech, etc)
- Basic knowledge of medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, pathology, medications and laboratory values
- Proven skills in English usage, grammar, punctuation, style and editing, grammar, diction, intonation, inflection and articulation;
- Excellent listening skills with excellent eye, hand, and auditory coordination

ADVANTAGES:
- Graduate of any allied medical course
- Any experience in medical transcription

** People with backgrounds in medical transcription will be prioritized for immediate hiring.

Interested applicants can personally submit their updated resumés at our office or send it through fax or e-mail.

29/F IBM PLAZA BUILDING, EASTWOOD CITY
LIBIS, QUEZON CITY 1100
TEL 911.8866 / FAX 911.8854
jobs@webservasia.com.ph

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PHILIPPINES

Zuellig Pharma Corporation has been setting the standard of excellence in the distribution, sales and marketing of pharmaceuticals in the Philippines for more than 60 years now. We serve over 70 multinational principals, continuously bringing their products to the market through some 13,000 pharma outlets, including drugstores, hospitals, clinics, and industrial accounts.

Today, we continue our commitment to provide industry leadership with services and products that are unrivalled in the country. We welcome your interest in employment opportunities at Zuellig Pharma Corporation. We are accepting for the position of .

Accounting Staff

Position Code: AS01.04
The Accounting Staff is responsible for Inventory Costing and Analysis, Preparation and Review of PAL Promo Allowances and CSO Billings and Accounts Analysis.

Qualifications

- 22-25 yrs. old, Female
- Must be a CPA
- At least two-year work expenence in a Multinational Company preferably in a Pharmaceutical Industry
- Analytical
- Can work under pressure: Patient
- Process-Oriented; Customer-Oriented

For Interested jobseekers, please bring/send your resumé with picture to...

Human Resources Division
2/F Zuellig Pharma Corporation
Malugay Street
Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue
Makati City
Or send via email to
recruitment@zuelligpharma.com.ph
Or
fax your resumé to
(6 32) 867 31 94

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

Our company, an importer and exclusive distributor of tires & motor oil brands and authorized distributor of MARIWASA and TOTO products, is in need of dynamic and aggressive individuals. A competitive package awaits the successful candidate for the following positions:

OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

Male, 25 to 30 years old; graduate of Mgt., Marketing, Accounting or any related course; Computer literate & excellent communication skills; • At least 2 years Supervisory experience in the field of sales operations & must also possess salesmanship skills • The successful candidate shall oversee the day-to-day operations of the company such as Sales and Deliveries and be responsible in supervising the Sales Operations staff.

JUNIOR AUDITOR

Male, at least 23 years old, preferably CPA • Willing to go on field & out of town assignments • A strong background in financial & operations audit • Can design audit systems, policies & procedures.

SALES OFFICER

Male/Female, 24 to 30 years old; Graduate of Marketing, Architecture, Interior Design, Engineering • Preferably with selling experience in the construction industry.

APPLICANTS MUST SEND THEIR RESUMÉS WITH TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS WITH PICTURE TO:

TASCO, INC.
No. 70 20th Avenue, Murphy, Quezon City
Phone Nos. 911-6207; 911-8891

We are an International Freight Forwarding Company
In Preparation for the Company's Expansion for 2004, we will hire:

SALES EXECUTIVES

If you are:
- Between 21-27 years of age
- A graduate from a reputable school and with good scholastics records
- Highly motivated
- A team player
- An achiever, result oriented and can work under extreme pressure
- Articulate and can communicate well in English both spoken and written
- A holder of a valid driver's license

We offer to the successful candidates:
- Above-industry salary + allowance
- Liberal commission
- Opportunities for professional growth
- Travel incentives
- Car plan

If you have what it takes to be part of our organization, we invite you to submit your comprehensive resumé with colored picture to:

SEND TO:
Postal Mail or Hand Carry: Unit 7 Columbia Airfreight Complex, 707 Ninoy Aquino Ave. Parañaque City 1700
Email: sander@optionslogistics.com.ph

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS WILL BE INVITED FOR A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS.
Important: Previous applicants need not apply

IMMEDIATE HIRING!

International Publishing Company requires

SALES/MARKETING EXECUTIVE

- Excellent interpersonal and Communication skills-both oral & written
- Preferably sales experience in Educational Product lines
- Organized and can work with minimum Supervision

ACCOUNTING CLERK

Accounting graduate
Hardworking and can work with minimum supervision

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Pasay City or Call - Tel. No.: 831-3690/821-3690

VSO

BAHAGINAN

*the Southern Volunteer Programme Philippines, offers a unique opportunity for Filipino professionals to share their skills with the disadvantaged people of the developing countries in **Asia, Africa**, the Balkans and the **Carribean/ Pacific region**, while learning about other cultures.*

SHARE YOUR SKILLS WHERE THEY REALLY MATTER...

Be a VSO Volunteer Today!

If you are qualified and trained to practice any of these professions:

- ☐ **BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT**
  - ➢ NGO programme managers, livelihood officers and micro-credit/enterprise development advisers, small business / marketing development advisers, fundraisers/communication advisers, accountants
- ☐ **COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - ➢ community/social development workers, community facilitators/organizers, registered social workers
- ☐ **TECHNICAL & NATURAL RESOURCES**
  - ➢ agriculturists, agricultural business managers, agriculture extension officers, agriculture teachers, agro-foresters, community foresters, horticulturists, natural resources managers, fisheries specialists, livestock / vets
- ☐ **HEALTH**
  - ➢ doctors, pediatricians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, HIV/AIDS professionals, health managers and administrators, maternal and child health professionals, medical laboratory officers, primary health/community-based health educators, community nurses, learning difficulties nurses
- ☐ **EDUCATION**
  - ➢ curriculum development specialists, education managers, English teacher trainers, teachers for Math and Science (secondary level)

And you are:

- ☐ from 25 to 68 years of age;
- ☐ college graduate, with at least three years relevant work experience;
- ☐ in good health/medically fit;
- ☐ able to speak and write well in English;
- ☐ able to spend up to two years working in a developing country;
- ☐ willing to live modestly in volunteer allowance; and
- ☐ willing to be assigned where you are most needed...

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DO IT?

Send in your detailed resumé and a letter of intent through email at philippines.registry@vsoint.org, or via post mail to:

The Programme Manager
VSO Bahaginan
Unit 505, Pacific Corporate Center
131 West Avenue, Quezon City, 1105

As a VSO volunteer, you will have extraordinary opportunities:

- ❖ living and working as part of a different community for two years;
- ❖ gaining fresh insights and understanding;
- ❖ enhanced career prospects upon your return; and
- ❖ enough memories to last you a lifetime.

We provide trainings to help you prepare as a volunteer and you will receive modest financial support during your time overseas and a small end-of-service grant.

APPLY NOW! Recruitment is on a continuous basis. Visit our website at **www.vso.org.uk** (click "Other VSO Sites" and go to "Southern Volunteers") for a more comprehensive information about VSO and Bahaginan.

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why not work for the best?

meet the challenge & be **distinct** from the rest.

Ambergris Solutions is a leading Philippine-based provider of offshore quality customer care services for American companies in the utilities, IT and telecommunications industries through local infrastructure

Operations Managers
(Sales, Customer Service, Tech Support)

- Responsible for Managing the Program involving activities which contribute to the acquisition, satisfaction and retention of customers.
- Candidate must have 2 to 3 years experience in a call center, managing an account with sales targets and deliverables for 150 agents.
- Exposed to client-relationship management.
- Competencies include but not limited to: Business Mastery, Strategic Planning, Report Analysis, Forecasting, Project Management, Organizational Leadership, Relationship Management, Multi-tasking exercises.
- Experience working in a high volume, inbound contact center environment, locally or abroad.
- Solid sales background in PC hardware.
- Strong orientation towards customer-service.
- Knowledge of PC hardware, networking, and technical troubleshooting.

Assistant Operations Managers/ Shift Leaders

- Responsible for managing the customer-service and call center departments involving activities which contribute to the acquisition, satisfaction and retention of customers.
- Candidate must have 2 to 3 years experience in managing his/her own small business unit (with functional skills in Sales, Finance, HR and Operations).
- Exposed to client-relationship management, call center experience a big plus.

Team Captains

- The first line supervisor of a team of CIAs
- Candidate must posses a minimum 1 year supervisory experience from any industry; call center experience is a big plus.
- Must be customer-service and/or sales oriented. Willing to work in shifts including graveyard.

Operations Managers - Sales - Customer Service - Technical Support	Organizational Development Manager
	Speech Trainers
	Quality Assurance Analysts
Asst. Operations Managers/ Shift Managers	HR Generalists, Associates & Assistants - Ortigas-based - Alabang-based
Team Captains	
300 Inbound Sales Associates	PABX Administrator
	Workforce Analysts
350 Customer Interaction Associates	Reports Analyst
Training Officers	Company Nurses

31/F Discovery Center
25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center
Pasig City, 1600
JOBSHOTLINE: 638-9440 loc.1222
recruitment@ambergrissolutions.com

OPEN HOUSE: Monday-Fridays 9AM-7PM
Walk-ins will be immediately interviewed.
Previous applicants need not apply.

Management Job Fair

Let us help you map out your career. Join us at our Management Job Fair.

Jan. 13 & 14, 9AM - 7PM
41st Floor, Magellan Function Rm.
Discovery Center,
25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center
Pasig City

Campus Tour

Budding Neophytes? Build your career with us. We cant wait to see you at your institutions!

ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY
Jan. 19-23, 9AM - 5PM
Company Forum on Jan. 20, 12PM - 1PM

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
Feb. 3-5, 9AM - 5PM

UNIVERSITY OF STO. TOMAS
Feb. 4-6, 9AM - 5PM

MIRIAM COLLEGE
Feb. 5-6, 9AM - 5PM

ASSUMPTION COLLEGE
Feb. 9, 9AM - 5PM

ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE
Feb. 18-19, 9AM - 5PM

ambergris

Rustan Marketing Corporation

is in urgent need of a top caliber:

Sales Manager for Consumer Durable Products

- Female; between 28-35 years old
- Graduate of a four-year business related course
- Minimum of three (3) years managerial experience in a retail selling environment
- Preferably with experience in distributing consumer products
- Creative and with excellent communication skills
- Must possess a pleasing, aggressive and dynamic personality
- Must be computer literate

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED TO SEND IMMEDIATELY THEIR COMPREHENSIVE RESUMÉ, TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS AND A RECENT 2x2 PHOTO TO:

Rustan Marketing Corporation
c/o Executive Administration
Ground Floor Midland Buendia Bldg.
403 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
E-mail address: cspagkalinawan@rgoc.com.ph

(We will reply to qualified applicants only)

A WORLD-CLASS MEDICAL CLINIC **URGENTLY** NEEDS:

BUSINESS OPERATIONS HEAD

Responsibilities:

- Translate company strategies into organizational initiatives/activities;
- Formulate and implement marketing and selling plans and strategies;
- Develop new marketing packages and advertising programs;
- Oversee all operational activities of sales and non-sales staff.

Requirements:

- At least 5 years work experience in sales, marketing and operations in a service-oriented industry;
- Graduate of Business Administration, Sales, Marketing or Medical Science related course;
- Successful track record in people and project management;
- Excellent written and oral communication and presentation skills;
- Result-oriented with very good leadership and interpersonal skills;
- Highly creative, innovative, flexible and resourceful;
- Computer literate

Interested applicants may send their curriculum vitaé with 2x2 photo at:

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX # MN2050
c/o Classified Ads
Philippine Daily Inquirer
P. Tamo cor. Yague & Mascardo Sts.
Makati City

A fast moving company is in need of experts!

BRAND MANAGERS

- Female; not more than 35 years old
- Graduate of any course; Master's Degree an advantage
- At least 5 years experience as Brand/Product Manager of consumer products
- With expertise in all marketing aspects (advertising, promotions, sales, market research, product conceptualization, etc.)
- Experience in handling cosmetics/beauty products line is an advantage
- Excellent communication skills; Computer literate
- Pleasing personality; results-oriented person, resourceful, highly creative and organized
- Willing to travel

Please send/fax/e-mail your resumé or apply personally at:

The Human Resource Department
1 Pinesville St. cor. Katipunan Avenue, White Plains Subdivision, Quezon City
Trunk line: (02) 9124568/94; Facsimile 4212142; e-mail nseexco@info.com.ph

We are not an agency.

GRAND JOB FAIR THIS JANUARY

MACASIRAY - MARIÑAS & ASSOCIATES

URGENTLY NEEDS...

JUNIOR MANAGER
MANAGEMENT TRAINEE
CORPORATE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

48-GRADUATES OF: PT, OT, RT, BSN & any MED. courses
- License of Non-License & good pleasing personality

38-GRADUATE OF: IE, ECE, EE, ME, CE & Archi.
- Self motivated & willing undergo training

28-GRADUATES OF: BSC, Tourism, Edc., Philo & Psyc
- Managerial skill is an advantage

12-GRADUATES OF: CoE, ComSci & other IT related courses.
- Creative, good analysis & hardworking

EX OFW/OCW ARE WELCOME TO APPLY

- Age 20 to 35 years old, with 1 or more experience. Willing to be assign in different positions available in the company
- Fresh Graduates are welcome to apply
- Hiring starts on Jan. 12-16, 2004 (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM) **Accepted applicants from (Jan. 12-16, 2004 will start immediately).**

NO EXAMINATION GIVEN

Interested applicants may personally visit/contact us at the following address:
#235-C Mercan Bldg., EDSA Ext'n., Pasay City (near Value Point Mall & Allied Bank, walking distance form MRT Taft & LRT Edsa Station)

Look for MS. ESTRADA

Financial Management Services Company

WE ARE LOOKING FOR HONEST, HARDWORKING, AND HIGHLY DEDICATED PEOPLE, SALARY/COMMISSION UNLIMITED DEPENDING ON ACTUAL PERFORMANCE

- ☐ **Credit Investigators**
- ☐ **Field Motorized Collectors/Negotiators**
- ☐ **Field Collection Negotiators**
- ☐ **In-house Telecollectors**
- ☐ **Accounting Clerks**
- ☐ **Internal Auditors**
- ☐ **Encoders**

If you believe you are qualified and have the right attitude, please come and visit us with your biodata and picture.

Apply in person at:
10th Floor, One San Miguel Ave. Tower, Shaw Blvd. corner San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Ctr, Pasig City

ACG
Alexander Consulting Group
Strategic HR Solutions

It's No Game.

Professional Search is not a game. Finding the right person for the job requires years of experience in Human Capital Management, Executive and Mid-Management Recruitment. For us, Professional Search involves drawing on our consultants' local and global knowledge of the managerial market within each industry, and an exhaustive network of relevant industry contacts.

If you feel you have what it takes to be part of our pool of professionals and start a career with truly global corporations from various industries, then we may be looking for you.

At ACG, we take Professional Search seriously.

We are searching for:

Senior Consultant – Mobile Telecommunications
- M/F, 30-45 yrs. old, At least 8 yrs. experience in the mobile telecommunications industry. Has knowledge in Mobile Software Integration. With extensive software development experience. Excellent customer service and communication skills.

International Retail & Licensing Manager
- M/F, 28-40 yrs. old, Possesses an extensive network of contacts overseas. Exposed to different international business cultures. Has an understanding of the audio and video industry. With networking, international trade and on-line selling capabilities. Understands the legal side of licensing and trade networking.

Operations Manager – Call Center
- M/F, 30 yrs. old and up, At least 5 yrs. experience in call center operations, preferably handling inbound calls (customer service). With excellent planning and problem analysis skills. Should be people and customer oriented.

Total Quality Manager
- M/F, 27 yrs. old and above, At least 5 yrs. of quality process experience. With good presentation and business writing skills. Adept in handling customer claims, inquiries and complaints. Must have background in call center operations. Team player, creative and flexible.

Training and OD Officers
- M/F, 25-30 yrs. old. Can do organizational diagnosis & make use of simple OD models. Should have background in career development and performance management and planning, can do Training Needs Analysis. Technical Training and I.E. background is an advantage.

Human Resource Officers
- M/F, 25-30 yrs. old, at least 5 yrs. experience in H.R., strong background in payroll and recruitment. Innovative, aggressive and independent. With good decision making and problem analysis skills.

Materials Planning Analysts
- Male, 25-38 yrs. old, preferably I.E. Grad., with at least 3 yrs. experience in materials management and control and production planning, computer literate, with good communication skills.

Purchasers
- M/F, 25-35 yrs. old, preferably Industrial Engineering Grad., w/ 3 yrs. experience in purchasing and knowledge in supply chain and materials planning. Must have good communication skills.

Interested applicants may send their curriculum vitaé to:
Alexander Consulting Group
4/F Jaka II Bldg., 150 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City
E-mail: jwilson@alexander.com.ph
www.alexander.com.ph

An invitation to all who are interested to work in Call Center

If you are:

- Fresh from College or with experience
- Highly customer-oriented
- Flexible and proficient in English
- Willing to work on graveyard shifts

Then:

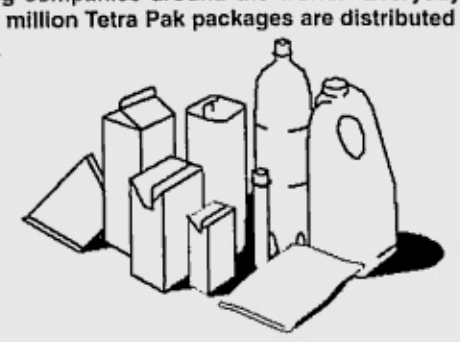
Come and see us for **TESTING AND INTERVIEW** every **Tuesday** for the whole month of January 2004 from 8:30am to 12:30pm. Venue will be at Basement 1, LKG Tower, 6801 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Please bring your comprehensive resumes with recent photos indicating your contact phone numbers.

Professional Staffers

Level 12B, LKG Tower 6801, Ayala Avenue, Makati City
884-1169 / 884-1418 / 8841227
Email : prostaffers@johnclements.com
www.johnclements.com

Tetra Pak is dedicated to the development, manufacturing and marketing of systems for processing, packaging and distribution for liquid food products. We produce packaging materials at more than 50 plants and have more than 165 marketing companies around the world. Everyday more than 200 million Tetra Pak packages are distributed in 165 markets.



PROCESSING SYSTEM SALES MANAGER

For the sales of processing lines and systems for the liquid food industry, we are looking for a System Sales Manager.

Must be self-driven, independent and dedicated individual with a clear sense of customer support, but also works well as a team player.

Must be an Engineering graduate w/ a minimum of 5 years sales experience for Process Equipment sales. Experienced in food processing equipment is an advantage.

Must manage a team of sales engineers.

Must be computer literate.

Likes to travel and must possess a driver's license.

Successful candidate will be offered a good compensation package, including a company car, as well as an extensive training program both locally and internationally.

Successful candidate is expected, in due time, to take charge of the whole Processing Division.

Interested candidates should send their curriculum vitae to:

Tetra Pak (Philippines), Inc.
7th Flr., Net One Center, 26th St. cor. Third Avenue
Fort Bonifacio, Global City , Taguig, 1634
Or Mail to:
HR/ ADMIN. OFFICER
P.O. Box 3562, MCPO 1275, Makati City

MEDICard

MEDICard PHILIPPINES INC.
One of the country's leading HMO is looking for assertive, dynamic and energetic individuals to fill up the following vacancies:

DIRECT ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR
- Female, 24-28 years old, 5'2" and above in height;
- Preferably a graduate of medical related course or Mass Communication;
- With pleasing personality and above-average communication skills
- At least 2 years experience in Account Management.

MARKETING ASSISTANTS/CUSTOMER RELATIONS ASSISTANTS
- Male/Female, not more than 26 years of age. At least 5'4" in height;
- Preferably a graduate of any of the following courses: Marketing, Advertising or Mass Communications;
- With above-average written and oral communication skills;
- Must be computer literate & willing to do field work.

LIAISON OFFICERS
- Male/Female, 21 to 28 years old;
- Graduate of any Medical Course; Willing to do field work;
- Must possess above-average communication skills & with pleasing personality.

REGISTERED NURSES / MEDICAL, XRAY TECHNOLOGISTS
- With pleasing personality and above-average communication skills. No work experience required.

We also need General Clerks

Qualified and interested applicants are requested to apply personally. Bring resumé, transcript of records and 2x2 photo at:

Human Resources Department
MEDICard Philippines, Inc.
8/F World Center Bldg.
#330 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
Email address: ralegria@medicardphils.com

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(Concessionaire on Sportswear for Domestic Market)

Merchandisers
Computer Graphic Artists
Accounting Staff
Inventory Encoders / Sales Inventory Analysts
Pattern / Sample Makers

Experienced. College grad. Computer Literate. Past experience w/ concessionaire work is a great advantage.

Apply Jan. 12, 13, 14, 15
ELSONS ENT. INC.
Annex II Reliance Center Bldg. 99 E. Rodriguez jr. Ave. Ugong, Pasig City
Tel#s. 671-9931 to 34 (Located in between Diamond Motors & Ajinomoto in front Valle Verde 2 along C-5)
Prefer Personal Interview 9:30 AM-3PM only
or Email resume to elsons@info.com.ph

PRIVATE TUTOR/THERAPIST

Full time position. Candidate will handle a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Qualifications:
- 21-28 years old Male
- With or without previous experience
- Graduate of Psychology, SPED, Early Childhood Education, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy
- Can communicate well in English
- Has good disposition in handling special children

Interested applicants may submit their resumé with latest photo via mail to:

Ms. Maria Anna Enriquez
Re: Private Tutor/Therapist
Unit 506, 5/F Tower 1
Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue
Makati City

or email to nina9886@info.com.ph
Walk-in applicants will not be entertained.

The Manila Pavilion Club

Is in immediate need for

SALES CONSULTANTS

- College graduate of any course
- With sales/telemarketing experience an advantage
- Customer service oriented.
- Good interpersonal and communication skills

Interested applicants may call 536-7471 and look for Ms. Mary Anne Talusan or Ms. Carmen Santiago. Applicants should call first since it will serve as their initial interview. They may call from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday- Friday.

RAMCAR TECHNOLOGY INC.

URGENTLY NEEDS THE FOLLOWING:

ASSISTANT MOULDMAKERS
22-30 years old; Male
Graduate of Technical/Vocational course
With 3-5 years experience in Moldmaking or Machine Shop

MACHINISTS
20-28 years old; Male
Technical/Vocational course graduate
With at least 2 years experience in Machine Shop Operation

ASSISTANT MACHINE ASSEMBLERS
30-35 years old; Male
Technical Course Graduate
With minimum of 5 years experience as Machine Assembler

CNC OPERATOR
19-28 years old; Male
Graduate of Technical course
Must have basic knowledge or training in CNC Machine Operation

CLERK/ENCODER
19-28 years old; Female
Technical Course Graduate
Preferably with orientation/experience in SAP

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED TO APPLY PERSONALLY WITH THEIR RESUMÉ AND 2X2 I.D. PICTURE TO:

THE CORPORATE RECRUITMENT SECTION
(BATTERY GROUP)
RAMCAR CENTER 80-82 Roces Avenue, Diliman, Q.C.

NISSAN

NISSAN NORTH EDSA BALINTAWAK

BE PART OF A WINNING TEAM!
(NISSAN NORTH EDSA)
SHIFT_the future

WE NEED

SALES PROFESSIONALS

Male or Female, 21-28 years old
With dynamic character, strong and pleasing personality, Chinese speaking is an advantage, High-line professional with good oral and written communication skills, preferably with selling experience.

Qualified applicants will receive competitive salary plus unlimited commission.

Apply in person with resumé & 2x2 photo (Mon - Wed) at:

1174 EDSA, BALINTAWAK, QUEZON CITY
Tel. No. 3305331-50 & look for Mr. Dindo Aquino

SM Lucena

We've got all the best jobs for you.

Customer Service Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with pleasing personality and can handle customer concerns and complaints effectively
- with at least 1 to 2 years experience in customer service

Selling Manager / Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least 1 to 2 years experience in retail operations, food chain or in sales in the same capacity
- personable and can handle customer concerns and complaints effectively

Checking Manager / Counter Supervisor

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least 1 year experience in credit card transaction in the same capacity
- flexible and can handle customer concerns and complaints effectively

Customer Relations Service Manager

- graduate of Criminology or any 4-year business course
- male, must be 5'5 1/2 in height & female 5'2 in height
- with at least 1 year related work experience
- flexible to different work assignments and willing to be assigned in provincial branches
- must be physically fit and willing to work on extended hours
- with at least 1 year related work experience

Advertising & Promotion Coordinator

- graduate of any 4-year business course
- with at least 1 to 2 years experience in advertising
- must be creative and with good fashion sense
- good verbal and written communication skills required

Customer Relations Representative

- graduate of Criminology or at least 2nd year college
- male, must be 5'5 1/2 in height & female, 5'2 in height
- flexible to different work assignments
- must be physically fit

Interested parties may apply personally from Monday to Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at SM Lucena Department Store at Dalahican Road, corner Maharlika Highway, Ibabang Dupay, Lucena City.

(Please bring Bio-data, 2 pcs. 2x2 colored picture with white background, SSS Number and photocopy of your Transcript of records and Diploma together with the original copy)

THE WORLD BANK
Requires A

TEAM ASSISTANT

The World Bank Office Manila (WBOM) has a vacancy for a **top caliber Team Assistant** to provide efficient and high- quality secretarial and administrative support to managers. This position will be for a two-year term appointment, subject to one-year probationary period, with possibility of renewal. Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Provide wide range of administrative and secretarial support to Managers, including maintaining schedules and/or appointments and arranging meetings and travels; independently drafting correspondence i.e. memoranda, letters, faxes, e-mails; producing high quality word processing and PowerPoint materials; proofreading and editing of a variety of reports, correspondence and documents, ensuring compliance with standard procedures; screening and prioritizing communications and telephone calls; liaise with external clients and partners; managing the flow of information and monitoring/following up on outstanding issues and deadlines; handling administrative and logistic arrangements for conferences/seminars/workshops; establishing and maintaining an effective database of network of contacts; ensuring efficient records management and maintaining full familiarity with pertinent documents/reports; assisting with administrative procedures and dealing with sensitive and confidential information.

Selection criteria:

- College degree in any Social Science or Business courses;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, ability to establish and maintain excellent work relations in a team environment;
- High degree of initiative, flexibility and resourcefulness with a drive for efficiency and results;
- Excellent organizational skills, ability to prioritize assignment and work effectively under pressure with minimum supervision;
- High level of proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Database program);
- Thorough working knowledge of general office procedures, facsimile machines and e-mails; and
- Minimum five (5) years experience in secretarial and administrative work, preferably with high ranking officials.

The World Bank offers a competitive compensation package based on the local market, and attractive medical and pension plans. The salary will not be subject to income tax.

Please send your Application Letter, with comprehensive resume with details of your work experience, academic records, recent photo, references (at least three names with full contact details) not later than January 23, 2004 to:

KSearch Asia Consulting, Inc., c/o Ruby C. Barcelona at 22/F 139 Corporate Centre, 139 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or email to rubib@ksearch.com.ph ; fax to 893-6259

Only applicants who will be short-listed will be called upon for interview.

KSEARCH ASIA CONSULTING INC

SPEED

HIGH-PERFORMANCE TECHNOLOGY

BE PART OF THE FASTEST GROWING TECH MAGAZINE!

If you're a creative, tech-savvy, well-read individual **(Editorial Assistant & Junior Artist)**; a young, vibrant and goal-oriented Marketing person **(Marketing Manager & Staff)**; or a young female fluent in both oral and written communication, organized and computer literate **(Account Manager/ Sales Assistant)**, send your resumé with picture/work sample to:

AJRO MEDIA INTERNATIONAL, INC
96-B Panay Ave., South Triangle Q.C., 1103
Tel.# 374-6771
or email: lala_hr@speed-mag.com
re: (position desired)

JUNNA GROUP OF COMPANIES

We are one of the country's leading industrial groups. Our Marketing division is seeking competent individuals to market products and services from any of the following applications : hydraulic engineering, maintenance tools, industrial cleaning or portable automated first aid equipment

Criteria:

- Male or Female
- Graduate of Mechanical, Electrical or Chemical engineering, any Automotive course or any Pre-med course.
- Possesses above average communication skills, oral and written in English and Filipino.
- Has exceptional public relation skills
- Willing to cover out-of-town areas within Luzon.
- With good moral character

* Fresh graduates are welcome

Attractive salaries, allowances and commissions are standard packages offered to successful candidates. Interested applicants may hand-deliver, mail or e-mail their resume with recent photo to the HR DEPARTMENT c/o Ms. Anna Gaspar.

JIC BLDG II 2419 Syquia cor. Calderon Sts., Sta. Ana, Manila 1009

E-mail Address: hradmin@junna.com

Telephone no. 563 5508 loc 309

PROMINENT FOREIGN BUSINESS ENTITY WILL SOON TO OPEN TRAVEL AGENCY IN MANILA – INVITING YOUNG AND DYNAMIC PROFESSIONALS TO OCCUPY THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

TRAVEL CONSULTANTS (M/F)

- Young, energetic graduates with minimum of 3 years experience in international travel handling multinational corporate clients.
- Candidates must possess excellent communication skills, thorough knowledge of fares, ticketing and CRS preferably Galileo. Standard or advanced IATA diploma will be an advantage.

SALES EXECUTIVES (M/F)

- Graduates with minimum of 3 years experience in selling travel related products and in account development and management. Basic understanding of fares and ticketing is preferred. Driver's license is a must.

TELEPHONE OPERATOR CUM RECEPTIONISTS (F)

- Presentable female candidates having minimum of 2 years experience in handling PABX board.
- Must possess excellent communication.skills.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (F)

- Female graduate having minimum of 3 years experience in similar field. Must possess excellent communication, correspondence skills and advance level knowledge of Microsoft office applications.

THESE ARE URGENT REQUIREMENTS!!!

Please send C.V., clearly specifying as subject, the position applied with your contact number or e-mail address and attach whole body / passport size photo, copies of employment certificate and educational credentials @ admin_st@emirates.net.ae

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Job Opening in Sales

A well established glass processing company highly active in the interior design and architectural industries is in hiring **one (1) Sales Personnel** with the following qualifications:

- male or female and a graduate of Architecture or Interior Design
- between 24-30 years old
- highly motivated with excellent communication skills
- good mathematical skills
- previous sales experience an advantage

Qualified and interested parties may send their resumé or bio-data with picture via email to:alndv@yahoo.com

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Elite Garments International, Inc.
owner and manufacturer of established brand names for the local and export market

solo freeway | ENSEMBLES

FASHION MARKETING EXECUTIVE

- Loves fashion and media
- Good organization & communication skills
- Creative background an advantage
- With at least 1-2 years work experience in related industries
- Female, below 28 yrs. old.

JR. INTERNAL AUDITOR

- Female, below 35 yrs. old
- BS Accountancy Graduate, CPA an advantage
- At least 2 yrs. related work experience in audit
- Highly analytical, computer literate & results oriented

Send resumé thru fax/e-mail/mail at:
PERSONNEL DEPT.
996 P. Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila
Tels. #525-3593/523-0957 Fax # 521-36-71
E-mail:grace@elitegarments.com

San Benildo Integrated School
De La Salle Supervised
Marcos and Sumulong Highway, Rizal
is in need of the following for SY 2004-2005:

- **GS & HS Teachers (all subjects)**
- **Guidance Counselor**
- **Librarian**

Applicants should bring the following:

- PRC License
- Letter of application & resumé with picture
- Transcript of records & recommendation letter from previous employer
- NBI, Photocopy of Birth & Baptismal Certificate
- Catholic Marriage Contract (if married)

For inquiries:
Please call 6811718/6608105/6608110

WANTED
ACCOUNTANT
22-28 years old with at least 3 yrs experience, computer literate

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Female, 22-28 yrs. old, with admin exp., computer literate, proficient in oral and written English, pleasing personality, preferably resident of Parañaque

Send resume and 2x2 picture to
No. 1 ACM Cpd.,
Sunrise St. Ext.,
Concorde Vill., MIA Rd.
Tambo, Parañaque

WANTED:

BOOKKEEPER

- Accounting graduate, with good school record
- 2-3 years relevant working experience
- Female, single, 22-30 years old
- Fluent in written & spoken English

ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN

- Electronics graduate with good school record
- 2-3 years relevant working experience
- Fluent in written & spoken English
- Willing to be trained

Send application letter, comprehensive resume, transcript of records, 2x2 picture and reference letters addressed to:

The Manager #4 Second Street, Kapitolyo, Pasig City
Or through email: cinephil@info.com.ph

WANTED
Audio-Visual Technician

- Graduate of B.S. in Electronics & Communication Engineering or any related course
- Male, single/married, 22-30 years old
- Relevant experience (preferably two (2) years) in operating, configuring, installing and/or setting-up lighting, audio-visual/sound system and multimedia technology

APPLY PERSONALLY:
NOTRE DAME OF GREATER MANILA
Madre Ignacia Avenue, Grace Park, 1400 Caloocan City
Tel. No. 361-7435 local 101

BRING: Transcript of Records, Bio Data, Handwritten application letter, SSS #, TIN ID Picture (1x1), X-Ray & Medical Certificate

---

WANTED FEMALE SALES AGENT

Excellent Sales Communication Skills,
Experienced, Part/Full Time
Up to P30T monthly income,
w/ transportation allowance
Bring Biodata, Mon.-Sat.,
11 a.m. onwards
Athena Body & Beauty Products
G/F Estuar Bldg., 41 Timog Ave., Q.C.
Tel.: 374-70-11 to 13

PASTRY CHEFS & BAKERS

With experience
Good communication skills

Please send resumé with detailed Work experience, Description of Skills, Kinds of Projects Handled & Contact Numbers to

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5th Flr. Bldg. B, SM Megamall, Edsa
Mandaluyong City

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Oxfam

Oxfam GB's purpose is to work with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering

Oxfam Great Britain's Philippine Programme needs an

Assets and Markets Programme Officer

- To plan, implement, monitor and evaluate Oxfam's Assets and Markets programme
- To contribute to the further development of the programme's framework, strategic plans and strategies, including its gender aspects
- To relate with and manage existing and potential partners and donors: project appraisals and grant making, capability and organization-development support, assistance in emergency operations during major disasters, and networking
- To help ensure excellent standards in programme and financial systems, procedures and practice
- To liaise and maintain relations with assets and markets partners and other appropriate bodies

Core Competencies:

- Mature understanding of development work in the Philippines, preferably assets and markets
- Conceptual, critical and analytical thinking
- Initiative and drive to achieve results
- Ability to work effectively with others
- Adaptable and flexible

Essential Specifications

- Proven experience in development work, demonstrating competencies in programming and budgeting
- Understanding of development and issues, and an ability to incorporate gender into the analyses, programme strategy and implementation and M&E
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and work under pressure and to deadlines, sometimes in situations of stress and uncertainty
- Good interpersonal skills and the ability to work sensitively with people from various cultural and social backgrounds
- Willing and able to travel frequently, for extended periods, and to remote areas
- Computer literate
- Fluent written and spoken English

Desirable Specifications

- Work experience in assets and markets programme areas
- Good business acumen
- Knowledge of any Philippine language other than Tagalog
- Training experience

Submit application letter with complete CV to:

The Human Resources and Administrative Officer
OXFAM GREAT BRITAIN
95-A Malumanay Street
Teacher's Village
Diliman, Quezon City 1101
FAX: 927-0499 email: etadeo@oxfam.org.uk

Deadline of application : January 23, 2004
Interview date : January 30, 2004

ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE NOTIFIED FOR INTERVIEW

TERADYNE

Is the world's largest supplier of automatic test equipment and software for the telecommunications and electronics industries. It is engaged in parts and repair services support for mixed signal, VLSI and memory testing. Its Repair Center facility in CEBU has been in operation since 1996 and its Customer Care Center and Process Lab Operations that recently opened in 2003 employs nearly 200 personnel. With the unprecedented growth of the Company, we are looking for individuals who are creative, aggressive, and mature to fill up the position of:

SERVICES SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGER (CODE: SSCM)

Duties/ Responsibilities/ Essential Functions:

As a Global Customer Service Supply Chain Manager, you will be part of the team of professionals responsible for managing the worldwide service logistics inventory network that supports Teradyne's customers. You and your team will be focused on the management Logistics and Material Planning operations in Teradyne's Cebu facility.

Your primary responsibility is to drive the material flows of parts coming to Cebu for repair and then out to replenish the Worldwide service inventory. You will also manage a growing Services Material Planning team, chartered with managing the Worldwide pipeline of services inventory to achieve Level of Service and Asset Utilization goals. You will be interfacing with a global team of Logistics and Planning professionals to create best in class service support for Teradyne's installed test equipment.

Global Customer Services

Qualifications:
-The candidate must be a graduate of any 4-5 year College degree, preferably an MBA graduate with at least 8 years experience in Logistics and Materials Planning
-Preferably with more than five (5) years prior management experience
-Strong analytical, interpersonal and communication skills
-Possesses strong leadership skills and is flexible in dealing with employees

We shall only accommodate candidates with specific qualifications and skills requirements as stated above.
The Successful candidate will receive a competitive compensation and benefits package within the Semiconductor and electronics industry and has the opportunity to work in a technology driven company like TERADYNE.
THIS IS AN URGENT REQUIREMENT. Please send your **application letter** together with your **resume** and **1x1 ID picture not later than 08 January 2004** to:

THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
Mactan Export Processing Zone II
Basak, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, Philippines 6015
Or email to: **Philippines.jobs@teradyne.com**

International Healthcare Trends Nursing Training Center

POEA License No. 004-LB-012703-PL

INVITES REGISTERED NURSES

Ms. Gemma Seidl, CCRN, RN, BSN, Director of Nursing of Coast Plaza Doctor's Hospital will facilitate the screening and orientation on these dates and venues:

US$500 Bonus upon approval of green card!

January 12, 2004
10:00 am - 12:00 nn
International Healthcare Trends
Rm. 304 Benlor Bldg. 1184
Quezon Avenue, Quezon City

HURRY! LIMITED SEATS ONLY!

Coast Plaza Doctor's Hospital
(Southern California, USA)

January 13, 2004
1st Session - 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
2nd Session - 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 nn
Conference Room, Business Center (3rd level)
HOLIDAY INN GALLERIA SUITES,
ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG

January 19, 2004 (1-2 p.m. and 4-5 p.m.)
METRO CENTRE HOTEL
Tagbilaran City, BOHOL

Please bring your resumé, latest ID pictures and copies of your credentials. CGFNS/NCLEX passers or those awaiting results will be given a priority. You may confirm your attendance and call International Healthcare Trends at (02)373-5915 and (02) 373-8020 or visit us at Rm. 304, BENLOR Bldg. 1184 Quezon Avenue, QC.

International Healthcare Trends Nursing Training Center also conducts reviews for CGFNS/NCLEX/IELTS. Inquire Now!

GHD

MANAGEMENT ENGINEERING ENVIRONMENT

DESIGN ENGINEERS ARCHITECTS QUANTITY SURVEYOR ACCOUNTANT

GHD is an international consultancy providing leadership in management, engineering and environmental services with a commitment to sustainable development. The company is seeking applications for the following positions in our Manila office:

Senior Structural Engineer
- Registered Engineer, specializing in Structural Engineering
- Minimum 8 years structural design experience
- Experience in civil and industrial structures would be an advantage

Senior Civil Engineer
- Registered Civil Engineer
- Minimum 5 years civil and/or water design experience
- Experience using CAD based design packages (e.g. MX) would be an advantage

Professional Electrical Engineer
- Minimum 10 years design experience
- Experience in civil infrastructure e.g. pump stations, hydro power is desirable
- May be project based appointment

Professional Mechanical Engineer
- Minimum 10 years design experience
- Experience in civil infrastructure e.g. pump stations, hydro power is desirable
- May be project based appointment

Senior and Junior Architects
- Registered Architect with minimum 10 years design experience for the Senior positions
- Minimum 5 years design experience for the Junior positions
- Experience in the design of hospitals and similar buildings would be an advantage

Quantity Surveyor
- Registered Civil Engineer
- Minimum 5 years experience in civil infrastructure

Graduate Design Engineers
- Civil Engineers with up to 5 years experience in engineering design office
- Excellent university results

Accountant
- Accounting degree, preferably CPA with minimum of 3-4 years experience
- Working knowledge in F/S preparation, account analysis, and reporting to government agencies (SEC, BIR, SSS, HDMF and Philhealth)
- Experience in audit and knowledge in Great Plains would be an advantage

The applicants for all positions must have strong technical abilities, be computer literate and have excellent oral and written communication skills.

Send your curriculum vitaé covered by an application letter describing your suitability for the position on or before 20 January 2004 to:

GHD Pty. Ltd., 2/F 111 Paseo de Roxas St., Legaspi Village, Makati City or e-mail us at Josephine_Lubo@ghd.com.au
www.ghd.com.au

The best companies need the best people.

INSYNC

Institutional Synergy, Inc.

EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES

Our client, an international non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in dire poverty, is currently in need of highly qualified candidates for the position of:

INTERNAL AUDITOR - ASIA

THE JOB: The hired candidate will be responsible for the auditing of the foundation's operations in Asia.

THE REQUIREMENTS: The candidate must be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with at least 3-5 years' audit experience, preferably gained from a top audit firm or a multinational company. Likely to be less than 35 years old, the ideal candidate must have very good computer skills (Office 2000, Excel, Word and Access) and possess excellent communication, interpersonal and leadership skills. Furthermore, he or she must be a self-starter; able to work independently with minimum supervision. Extensive international travel is required.

The organization offers an attractive compensation and benefits package. Qualified applicants are invited to send their resumes with application letters, including contact numbers, current and expected pay, and a recent photograph to: Institutional Synergy, Inc. Unit 608, 6/F Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City or e-mail them to isi@insync.com.ph. All applications should be received on or before January 22, 2004. (*note: we will reply only to those considered for interview).*

A New Bar & Restaurant

will be opening at the Fort Strip at the Global City

We are looking for experienced individuals to be pioneers in bringing about a new trend of dining experience:

- ☐ **CHEF** - preferably female with knowledge in euro-asian cuisine
- ☐ **OPERATIONS MANAGER**
- ☐ **SUPERVISORS & PARTY HOSTS**
- ☐ **WAITERS & WAITRESSES**

* All front of the House applicants should have a pleasing personality and should be at least 5'4" in height for females, and 5'6" for males.

Send your resumés with your photograph by e-mail through jballano@hotmail.com or contact Mr. Jim Ballano through 0919-3207879 or 437-2137

ARTISTS Wanted

QUALIFICATIONS

knowledgeable in graphics such as: photoshop, corel draw and flash preferably with autoCAD literacy creative and able to prepare different designs of booths and perspective

Please submit your resumé with 2x2 colored photo to:
POWER HEADS PHILIPPINES
104 P. Cruz Street, Mandaluyong City
534-45-81 / 746-10-89

Rustan's

urgently needs ...

LOSS PREVENTION MANAGER

- Between 30 – 40 years old
- Graduate of Industrial Engineering, Accountancy or Business Administration
- Familiar with Process ReEngineering
- Must be highly analytical and strategic
- Must have good exposure on the following areas:
  - — Loss Prevention-control of inventory shrinkage
  - — Company Safety
  - — Internal Audit
  - — Inventory Control
  - — Insurance Claims Management
  - — Insurance Procurement
  - — Security of Corporate Assets, Facilities and Data
  - — Supply Chain Procedure (Warehouse Processes)

SALES CONSULTANTS

- Four (4) year course graduate from a reputable school
- Has the ability to develop and sustain productive customer relationships
- Must possess good learning/thinking abilities, articulate with a high level of confidence
- Proficient in the English language & able to communicate ideas and information
- 5'4 in height for female, 5'6 for male
- Familiarity with Rustan's high end market
- Must have effective interpersonal, networking and selling skills
- Proficiency in other foreign languages would be an advantage

Qualified applicants may send their comprehensive resumé to:
RUSTAN COMMERCIAL CORPORATION
Human Resources & Organizational Development Division
G/F El Mercasol Bldg. EDSA, Mandaluyong City
or email to: mlbanogon@rustans.com.ph

AXA
PHILIPPINE AXA LIFE

WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST TO BE PART OF THE FIRST AND THE BEST...

Philippine AXA Life, a joint venture between Metrobank, one of the largest banks in the Philippines, and the AXA Group, one of the world's largest life insurers, is looking for enthusiastic, results-oriented and highly competitive candidates to join its elite BankAssure work force who has preference working or residents of METRO MANILA, BAGUIO, BENGUET, LA UNION, ILOCOS SUR, TUGUEGARAO, DAGUPAN, OLONGAPO, DAVAO, GENERAL SANTOS, COTABATO, MARBEL, KIDAPAWAN, TACURONG & MIDSAYAP.

FINANCIAL EXECUTIVES (FE)

The position entails meeting with clients, analyzing their personal financial background, advising them on appropriate action to be taken and concluding the sale of appropriate products and services and a lot of relationship building.

QUALIFICATIONS:
- **25 – 35 years old**
- **Must be a College graduate with at least 2 years professional experience with a successful track record not necessarily in the Financial Services industry**
- **A background in pharmaceutical, airlines, stock trading, real estate, retail sales, banking or insurance will be an advantage**

SKILLS & QUALITIES OF THE FINANCIAL EXECUTIVE:
- **Good interpersonal skills**
- **Excellent oral & written communication skills (Ability to speak Chinese will be an advantage)**
- **Sound analytical / numerical skills**
- **Effective judgment and comprehension**
- **Confident disposition/positive nature & outlook**
- **Ability to listen**

Qualified candidates should send their resumé, transcript of records and a 2" x 2" photo by Friday, 16th of January 2004 to

THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 2390, Makati City
or
may.soneja@axa.com.ph or fax: (02) 844-3911

Philippine AXA Life will offer chosen candidates a salary-based package plus excellent incentives, comprehensive training, and a very rewarding career in the financial services industry.

Member of the Metrobank Group

Multimedia Graphic Designer:

Responsible for print and digital concept, design, and layout of internal documents, brochures, posters, company profiles, annual reports, sales kits, packaging, audio-visual presentations and the like. Will liaise with external web design company to manage and maintain company website. Will also work with in-house programmers and developers to create GUIs and splash screens for existing software applications.

Applicants must:
- Have 1-2 years work experience in related field.
- Be well-versed with graphic and design software: Macromedia Flash & MX, Macromedia Director, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Pagemaker, Adobe Premiere, 3D Max. Knowledge in a programming language a plus.
- Have the ability to learn new applications or platforms quickly
- Be willing to perform other related duties as may be assigned by immediate supervisor from time to time

Portfolio required.

Software Developers:

Responsible for preparation of software development kits, and development of basic applications using smart card technology. Driver development experience a plus.
- Graduate of Computer Science, Computer engineering, or any other computer related courses.
- 1-2 years relevant experience using C++ as front-end tool. Experience in Linux and Unix a plus.

Sales and Marketing Engineers:

Responsible for finding potential projects and customers for IT solutions to be implemented locally. Will also need to support existing international market by communicating with overseas customers throughout the sales process. Minor tasks include preparing sales and presentation materials, and improving existing documentation.

Applicants must:
- Have an Engineering or any IT-related degree
- Have planning skills and be a team player
- Be highly aggressive and proactive
- Have excellent written and oral English
- Good presentation skills
- Have a proven ability to follow-up and close on a sale

Accountant/Administrative Executive:

Responsible for bookkeeping and general office management.
Applicants must:
- Have an Accounting degree
- At least 1 year work experience

Please contact 6385732 for more details, or send your resumé to mit@info.com.ph

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WANTED: 1st. Class Diesel Mechanics (Overseas)

Bisnes Mami, Phils., Inc., an Automotive and Truck Parts Dealer with offices in California, Guam, Saipan, Rota, and The Republic of Palau, has openings for two (2) 1st class Diesel Technicians for its Heavy Equipment Division in Saipan - Mid Pac Far East Micronesia.

The successful applicant must have the working knowledge and certificates in one or more of the following areas:

Cummins engines, Detriot Diesel engines, MBE, Allison transmission, power generation, marine engine repair, truck repair, and forklifts repair. He must also be knowledgeable in electronic engine and transmission control systems.

Applicant must be of good moral character, a team player, company-oriented, honest, hardworking, and capable of finishing a job efficiently without supervision. Familiarity with the PERT-CPM is a plus but not required. An excellent compensation package and opportunity to migrate and work in the United States await the successful applicants.

If you believe that you have the qualifications required fo the position, please send your resumé to:

Bob Robbins
P.O.Box 2602, MCPO Makati City, 1266
Tel: 843-1984 / 812-1101

or fax Resumé to : 1-671-632-5167
Attention: Larry Brazil

Police and Court Clearances, and Health Certificate are required during the interview and these documents should not be more than six (6) months old.

BF CITI REALTY
MARKETING CORPORATION

is in need of a young sales oriented person With pleasing personality

Sales Assistant

- Female/Male, Single
- 22 – 28 yrs. old
- With good communication skills
- Graduate of any 4-year course
- Knowledgeable in Windows application
- Pref. residents of P'que, Las Piñas or M'lupa area.

Pls. mail your resumé w/ recent 2x2 picture and TOR to:

BF CITI Land Corp.
PSCOR Bldg. 33 J. Elizalde St.
Phase 1, BF Homes, Parañaque City
E-mail: bfrealty@bfciti-land-corp.com.ph

A PROGRESSIVE SERVICE COMPANY IS IN NEED OF THE FOLLOWING

INDUSTRIAL ENGINEER
Male/Female, 22-28 yrs. old; Industrial Engineering graduate; w/ 2-3 yrs. experience in a production set-up; self-motivated; creative; alert & resourceful; proficient in oral & written communication; computer literate

MARKETING ASSISTANT
21-25 yrs. old; Business Management graduate major in Marketing with experience in the same capacity; confident in dealing with people; computer literate.

Send your updated resumé with 2x2 color picture and Transcript of Records mail to:
Unit E 20-B Twin Tower Condominium

An Award-Winning Triple A Resort is in need of the following:

OPERATIONS MANAGER
- Must be a hoteller or resort person and it is a must that they have at least two (2) years experience in F&B operations and or Rooms Division operations. (F&B experience will be priority)
- College graduate
- 30 years and above
- Good communication skills
- Should be a hands-on person
- Must be able to maintain high standards
- Willing to relocate

SPA MANAGER
- College graduate with pleasing personality
- at least 25 years old with experience in managing world class spa
- Possesses strong managerial skills to organize and run a holistic soon to open world class spa
- Knowledgeable in a wide variety of therapies and massage
- with excellent oral and written communication skills
- Knowledgeable of Japanese and Korean languages is an advantage

Interested parties may send their biodata with 2x2 photo to:
P.O. Box 1094, Cebu City

Shoemaker Shop, Inc. the Philippine distributor of Hush Puppies brand footwear, invites applicants for the following positions:

1. HRD and Administration Officer
- Graduate of Psychology, Behavioral Science, or any four-year Management course
- With experience in personnel management, recruitment, training and team building
- Knowledgeable in Labor Laws

2. Merchandise Officer
- Graduate of Marketing Management, or related four-year course
- With experience and knowledge in retail operations, buying and inventory management

3. Marketing Officer
- Graduate of Marketing, Management or related four-year course
- With experience in advertising and promotions management
- Articulate, and possesses strong leadership skills

4. Store Supervisors
- Graduate of Marketing, Management or related four-year course
- Naturally cheerful and service oriented
- Articulate and possesses strong leadership skills
- With supervisory experience in retail operations and personnel management
- Excellent communication skills

5. Sales Associates
- College level
- Naturally cheerful and service oriented
- Willing to work long hours and weekends
- At least 5'6" height for males, and 5'2" for females
- With above average physical appearance
- Not more than 24 years old

Interested applicants may submit their resumé with recent picture, transcript of records and previous employment certificate at:

24 Guerilla St., Sto. Niño
Marikina City
Tel. No. 941-7877

BENTON INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT AGENCY, INC.
License No. POEA-336-LB-071202-R
NON-STOP HIRING

APPLY NOW AND BE DEPLOYED IMMEDIATELY TO HONG KONG

HONG KONG:
GARFORD (HONG KONG) LTD. Reg. # 9922676
J AND M SERVICE CENTRE Reg. # 513677

50 FEMALE DOMESTIC HELPERS

SALARY: HK $ 3,270.00/month

QUALIFICATION:
1. Single/Married
2. 22-35 years old
3. With or without experience
4. Passport
5. Can understand, speak and read English

Apply personally at

BENTON INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT AGENCY, INC.
Main Office:
4th Floor Dalicon II Bldg., 164 Aurora Blvd., San Juan, Metro Manila
Telephone Number. 744-3096 / 722-2212

WE ARE CONDUCTING DAILY PRE-SCREENING OF APPLICANTS
INTERVIEW DATE OF PRINCIPALS: January 19 to 23, 2004

"MAG-INGAT SA ILLEGAL RECRUITERS"
"NO FEES TO BE COLLECTED"

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTING TASK FORCE

DepED

BULLETIN OF VACANT REGULAR POSITIONS
(In compliance with RA 9411)

(1) Project Development Officer V SG 24. Item No. OSEC-DECSB-PDO5-2-1998. Masteral degree; 4 years in positions involving management and supervision 24 hours of training in management and supervision. Career Service (Professional). Second Level Eligibility

(1) Records Officer II – SG 14. Item No. OSEC-DECSB-RO2-3-1998. Bachelor's degree, 1 year of relevant experience, 4 hours of relevant training. Career Service (Professional). Second Level Eligibility

Qualified applicants must send their resumé, transcript of records, recent ID picture and other credentials to:

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICE
DepED-EDPITAF
Dorm D, DepEd Complex
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

Deadline for submission of application is on January 16, 2004.

PARK
DEVELOPERS INC.
THE REAL ESTATE COMPANY

The country's leading Memorial Park Developer needs the following for its Manila, Cebu, Iloilo and Cabanatuan offices:

ACCOUNTING STAFFS
- Female, 21-28 years old
- Accounting course graduate, preferably a CPA
- hardworking, with pleasing personality
- with experience in general accounting

CIVIL ENGINEERS
- Male/Female, at least 28 years old
- must be a licensed Civil Engineer, with at least 4 years experience in road construction
- must know how to drive
- willing to work on extended hours
- with experience in handling personnel

SALES EXECUTIVES
- Male/Female, 21-36 years old
- hardworking, with pleasing personality
- must possess excellent communication skills, good in public relations
- at least one year sales experience of any product

CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSISTANTS
- Male/Female, 21-28 years old
- graduate of any business related course
- must possess excellent communication skills god in public relations, very articulate

OFFICE STAFF
- Male/Female, 21-28 years old
- preferably single
- graduate of any business related course
- hardworking with pleasing personality

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
- Female, 24-30 years old
- graduate of any business related course
- hardworking, with pleasing personality, must possess excellent communication skills
- experience is a must

HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR
- Grader Operator
- Payloader Operator
- Backhoe Operator
- Roadroller Operator

Very attractive compensation packages, which can go up to P60,000 plus incentives/commissions, await you.

We prefer applicants coming from prestigious schools

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS MUST COME IN BUSINESS ATTIRE FROM MONDAY TO SATURDAY, 9 AM – 3 PM WITH THEIR RESUME, 2 COPIES OF THEIR RECENT 2" X 2 PHOTO, TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS, LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN, NBI CLEARANCE, AND A COPY OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT TO:

PSP BUILDING
60 Amang Rodriguez Avenue corner
Marcos Highway, Pasig City

The HSBC Insurance Brokers (Philippines) Inc., a newly established subsidiary of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, is seeking applicants from highly motivated, committed sales and service-oriented individuals who wish to pursue a career in insurance broking as:

INSURANCE CONSULTANT

Be part of HSBC's dynamic team of direct sales professionals in Personal Insurance Planning Services. You will be responsible for soliciting and converting quality sales leads into new clients of HSBC Insurance Brokers, in both Life and Non-Life insurance lines. As an Insurance Consultant, you will proactively call, visit and make sales calls to win new business and work with our branches to support sales initiatives.

We are inviting applications from people with the following qualifications:
- College degree
- Experience in life insurance selling or telemarketing
- Strong communication, presentation and interpersonal skills
- Proven sales track record of life insurance products
- Good network of contacts
- Chinese language fluency a plus
- Philippine citizenship (this is a requirement)

Qualified applicants will undergo a selection process which includes a series of interviews and tests.

Extensive training, an automated work environment, and an attractive remuneration package which recognises and rewards performance await qualified candidates.

If you can commit to a high pressure but rewarding career in sales and be part of HSBC's 129 years of financial service excellence in the Philippines, send a full curriculum vitaé and a recent 2x2 photograph, together with a letter outlining your suitability for the above position on or before 16 January 2004 to:

Vice President
Resourcing and Development
HSBC
35F Discovery Suites
ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center,
Pasig City

NOTE: TELEPHONE QUERIES WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED

HSBC

Oxfam

Oxfam GB's purpose is to work with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering

Oxfam Great Britain's Philippine Programme needs a

Central Mindanao Humanitarian Project Manager

The post holder will manage Oxfam GB's multi-sectoral humanitarian programme in the Central Mindanao Region in accordance with Oxfam policies and agreed minimum standards and in line with the overall organizational objectives.

Key responsibilities:
- Maintain an up-to-date overview of the Central Mindanao humanitarian and development situation, analyse and interpret these to inform the programme's tactical and strategic position
- Manage programme operations and resources effectively, including finances, logistics, security and human resources, according to Oxfam's priorities, aims and guidelines, in a consultative, participative and gender-sensitive way
- Lead programme staff in ensuring that all of Oxfam's work addresses gender inequality, including assisting partners with integrating gender in all aspects of their programmes
- Ensure that Oxfam's programme is conducted in close coordination with relevant government as well as local & international NGOs
- Undertake communication work related to the Central Mindanao programme, including representation to government officials, UN agencies and other NGO staff as appropriate and with prior clearance from the Programme Representative
- Liase consistently with other Oxfam International affiliates, ensuring collaborative work
- Be an active member of the Oxfam country team
- Manage donor contracts and ensure that narrative and financial reports are produced on time and to the required standard

Core Competencies:
- Leadership and self-management
- Conceptual, critical and analytical thinking
- Initiative, drive to achieve results, ability to develop effective organizations
- Ability to work effectively with others, adaptable and flexible

Essential Specifications:
- Understanding and demonstrated experience in managing emergency, humanitarian and development work
- Minimum of 3 years experience in managing a multi-sectoral programme in a complex emergency situation
- Proven resource management capacity, including experience in managing multiple donors and finance systems
- Demonstrated analytical, conceptual and policy advocacy skills; in particular, an ability to rapidly assimilate, analyse and report on complex information
- Good interpersonal skills and the ability to work sensitively with people from various cultural and social backgrounds
- Willing to be assigned in the Central Mindanao Region, with home base in Cotabato City.
- Able to travel frequently, for extended periods, and to remote areas.
- Computer literate
- Fluent written and spoken English

Desirable Specifications:
- Knowledge of any Philippine language other than Tagalog
- Training experience

This position is for a fixed term of 1 year and six months.

Submit application letter and complete CV to:

Human Resources and Administrative Officer
OXFAM GREAT BRITAIN
95-A Malumanay Street
Teachers' Village, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City
FAX: (02) 927-0499; EMAIL: etadeo@oxfam.org.uk

Closing date : **February 16, 2004**
Interview date : **February 26, 2004**

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified for the interview.

THE POST IS OPEN TO PHILIPPINE NATIONALS ONLY.

A Fast Growing Company is in immediate need of service-oriented and dynamic Professionals to be part of our innovative company.

- **Marketing Officer**
- **Accounting Assistant**
- **Account Executive**
- **Sales Executive**

✓ Graduate from an exclusive & reputable school
✓ w/ at least 2 years working experience
✓ Dedicated and motivated
✓ Smart & Fast Learner
✓ Goal-oriented and able to work under pressure
✓ Fluent in oral & written communications (English)
✓ At least 25-35 years of age w/ pleasing personality

*****IF YOU THINK YOU ARE QUALIFIED & WANT TO MAKE IT BIG,** Please send your resumé w/ your most recent picture at 2nd flr., 280 San Fernando St., Binondo Mla. (5 mins walking distance from Binondo Church) or send email at Sa_phils_corp@yahoo.com

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Our company, a dynamic organization, is looking for high-caliber professionals to join our ranks in this challenging field of Information Technology

Marketing Communications Specialist	-Male / Female, at least 23 to 26 years old -Graduate of Business Management/Marketing/Advertising -Must be familiar in print ad sponsorships -Excellent inter-personal skills -Presentable/aggressive and with pleasing personality -Must be familiar with the IT industry in the Philippines
Channel Sales Executive	-Female, at least 23 to 27 years old -Graduate of computer related course -Goal-oriented, an achiever -Capable of handling computer resellers -Preferably at least 2 years experience in selling IT products -Must be familiar with the IT industry in the Philippines
Corporate Account Managers	-Male or female, at least 23 to 27 years old -Graduate of Business Studies/Management/Sales/ Marketing -At least 2 year(s) of working experience in selling IT products -Presentable/aggressive and with pleasing personality
Accounting Officer	-Female, at least 25 to 29 years old -Graduate of a 4 year BS Accounting course -At least one year experience in accounting related works -Knowledge in using Accounting software (i.e. Quickbooks, etc.) is an advantage

Qualified applicants may apply personally with their resume and photo to 3/F Wah Phil Building 1321 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City. For more information, please call 721-9405 to 10

The country's leading consumer goods distributor of the fastest moving food and non-food products **URGENTLY** needs top-caliber candidates for:

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING MANAGERS

The successful candidate will exercise overall responsibility over the company's finance and accounting functions; will lead the preparation of financial analyses and financial forecasts; and will oversee the implementation of adequate inventory, costs and other internal controls. He or she will be involved closely in all key business decisions.

Qualifications of preferred candidates include the following:
- Certified Public Accountant
- at least 3 years of relevant experience in accounting and controllership
- adequate skills in the use of accounting software packages
- trustworthiness; mature and responsible outlook
- excellent interpersonal and administrative abilities
- good oral and written communication skills

AN ATTRACTIVE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS PACKAGE INCLUDING COMPANY CAR AND EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OFFERED TO THE RIGHT CANDIDATES.

WE ALSO NEED:

ACCOUNTING CLERKS
VAN SALESMEN
ENCODERS
DRIVERS
MERCHANDISERS

We invite you to bring your resumé to our Human Resources Department, at No. 2 M. de Leon St., Santolan, Pasig City. Or e-mail it to rgpigamboa@pacific.net.ph; or fax it to Ms. Flordeliza Dialemas at 682-9065. For inquiries, please call 646-6078 up to 80 local 114 or 115.

For F&A Manager applicants, please include in your resumé your current and expected compensation.

A fast growing food company is open for hiring the following:

STORE & ROVING SUPERVISORS
✓ Female, college graduate
✓ Good communication and analytical skills
✓ Highly organized in work
✓ Honest, hard working and has good work ethics
✓ Preferably has experience in the food business
✓ Amendable in flexible schedules

ACCOUNTING CLERKS
✓ Female, Accounting graduate
✓ Fast encoder
✓ Highly organized in work
✓ Has experience in Accounting field

COMPANY DRIVERS
✓ Male, with experience in driving vans

COMPANY ELECTRICIAN
✓ Male, preferably graduate of electrical engineering
✓ With at least 2 years experience as co. electrician

Please apply in person at:

158 P. Sevilla St. between 6th & 7th Aves., Grace Park, Caloocan City.
Bring RESUME with 2x2 colored photo

WORLDS OF FUN AMUSEMENT

is in need of

TRAINING OFFICER

Male or Female, 24-32 y/o. Graduate of Psychology, Behavioral Science or Business Management. With at least 1 year experience in training needs analysis, design, evaluation & administration. With excellent communication (oral & written), interpersonal and project management skills. Must be flexible, creative and willing to travel. Must be computer-literate, including PowerPoint.

Interested applicants may send their resume with recent ID photo and contact telephone numbers, or personally come for an interview every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

2nd Flr. Reliance House, 205 EDSA cor Rochester St., Greenhills, Mandaluyong City (724-8601 to 06 loc 617)

MILLENNIUM PLAZA HOTEL

Service is our Business.

A premier serviced apartments in the heart of Makati is looking for highly motivated individuals to join our team of competent professionals to fill-up the following key positions:

SALES and OPERATIONS MANAGER
- Female, not more than 33 years old.
- Must have a minimum of 4 years experience in corporate sales, travel/business markets or hotel operations.
- Must be mature, assertive, highly personable with strong leadership skills.
- Has good exposure in local and foreign market.
- Excellence in verbal and written communication is a must.

SALES EXECUTIVES
- Female, not more than 26 years old with pleasing personality.
- Fresh graduates with leadership potentials are encouraged to apply, provided they are matured and has ease in dealing with a variety of people.

Candidates are requested to send their comprehensive resume at

MILLENNIUM PLAZA HOTEL
Second floor
Makati Avenue corner Ejdaque Street, Makati City
Fax No. 899-4746

An Established Garment Company
is in need of the following:

Industrial Engineer
- College graduate
- Good scholastic record
- Good leadership ability
- Must be hardworking
- 21 to 35 years of age

Custom Tailor
- with experience in custom made uniforms (Men's & Ladies')
- 30 to 40 years of age

Please send your resumé to:
1476 V.G. Cruz cor. Dimasalang,
Sampaloc, Manila

CUSTOMER RELATIONS SPECIALIST
- Male/Female, Preferably 22-30 years of age
- Candidate must posses a Bachelor's/College Degree
- Must have a very pleasing personality and posses exceptional PR skills
- Can comfortably and effectively communicate in English (a MUST)
- Can speak the other dialects of the Philippines is an advantage

TREASURY/ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT
- Male/Female, Preferably 22-30 years of age
- Candidate must be an Accounting or Economics graduate
- In-depth understanding of the Financial Market
- Above average communication skills

Interested applicants can mail their resumé at:

FAREAST EXPRESS REMITTANCE INC.
RM 203 Richbell Tower Condominium
17 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, MM

or you can email or fax it to:
job_fareastrem@yahoo.com
Fax No: 723-51-00

AMPHIL BIO CHEMICAL

Exclusive Distributor of MEGA™ Diagnostics, U.S.A.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Item 1: PRODUCT SPECIALIST

Qualifications:
- Registered Medical Technologist
- Actual Clinical Laboratory bench work
- Experience in a Clinical Laboratory Set up is a MUST.
- Marketing Background preferably (at least 2 years experience).
- Residence of South Metro Manila area preferred.

Item 2: MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST

Qualifications:
- Registered Medical Technologist.
- All around experience as a regular Medical Technologist in a Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory setup.
- (INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE will not be honored).

Item 3: MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE

Qualifications:
- Must be a Graduate of Medical Technology.
- Marketing Experience required.
- Must be willing to be assigned in Cavite Area.
- Very good communication skills.

All qualified applicants may submit resume with supporting documents to:
AMPHIL BIO CHEMICALS, INC.
Suite 708 Richville Corporate Tower
Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang
Muntinlupa City, Philippines
Tel. Nos: 850-1711; 850-1861

IT CROSSINGS – MANILA, INC., is an information technology outsourcing firm formed to cater to the Life and Health Insurance industry. This new firm will provide insurance companies with affordable IT services from it's offices in Net One Center, Bonifacio Global City. **IT Crossings** is a subsidiary of US based **LIDP Consulting Services Incorporated**, the premier provider of software solutions to the Life and Health Insurance industry. For 25 years **LIDP** has provided enterprise software and consulting services to many of the top insurance companies worldwide. **IT Crossings** will enable **LIDP** to continue to provide superior service to it's clients from it's Taguig offices. These services include conversion, interface, enhancement and testing support covering all areas of insurance operations.

We are currently in need of a:

PROGRAMMER / ANALYST

Requirements:
- University Graduate with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology or it's equivalent. Fresh graduates are welcome to apply.
- Preferably with 1-2 years experience with programming.
- Proficiency in Cobol, Java, Perl or CICS is preferred.
- Life Insurance background is preferred but not required.
- Must be resourceful, flexible, fast learner and possess good communication skills.

BUSINESS ANALYST

Requirements:
- University Graduate with a bachelor's degree
- At least 5 years experience in life insurance operations (Actuarial, Finance, Policy Servicing, New Business, Agency)
- Experience in business requirements definition and model office testing
- Exposure in systems/project implementations
- Strong analytical and problem solving skills
- Must be able to communicate effectively in both oral and written English
- Computer literate

Competitive remuneration packages awaits qualified candidates. Kindly forward your resumé to:

THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
Unit 5-3 Net One Center
Bonifacio Global City
Taguig, Metro Manila
Fax No.: 815-4936
E-mail: resume@itcrossings.com

DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES

Duty Free Philippines
is in need of

CASHIERS

QUALIFICATIONS

Male or Female; 20-30 years old
Graduate of any 4-year course
Pleasing personality, alert and patient
5'3" for Female & 5'5" for Male

REQUIREMENTS

Printed Resumé, 1 pc. 2x2 picture
Photocopy & Original of NBI Clearance (less than 1 year old), Birth Certificate & Transcript of Records

Applicants may apply personally at:

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT
Ground Floor, EHA Building
Duty Free Fiestamall
Ninoy Aquino Avenue, Parañaque City
(Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)

EXPERCS INTERNATIONAL INC.
An Integrated Outsourcing Company

Our client, a leading mobile GSM carrier in the Philippines and Asia, is currently looking for young and committed individuals to fill up the following regular positions for their call center:

Customer Service Specialists
Customer Service Assistants

- Previous working experience from the Call Center industry (international accounts).
- Fresh graduates from AdMU, DLSU-M, UA&P, UP, Assumption College
- Or graduates from other schools included in the Top 20% of the graduating batch.

Qualifications:
- Must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in any field
- Must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Must be willing to work in shifts
- Should be Filipino citizens
- Male or female

Applicants should forward their resumes to: Unit 7E, 7/F, Globe Telecom Plaza 1, 1 Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City
Email: grecruitment@expercs.com.ph
An attractive compensation and benefits package await successful applicants.

We are the exclusive affiliate of a worldwide training and consulting organization providing results-oriented training and consulting services to Fortune 500 companies and top Philippine organizations. We have an immediate opening for:

Account Managers

Who
- *Can plan and implement account management strategies with our existing client base, and capitalize/ leverage new business opportunities;*
- *Can initiate account development strategies with new client prospects;*
- *Can be a differentiating feature of doing business with existing clients and new prospects through superior consulting and value-added services.*

The candidates we seek should have:
- *A minimum of 3 years sales and/or account development experience*
- *A college degree, preferably from a reputable university*
- *Track record in sales and account development*
- *Excellent communication skills (a must)*

To the successful applicants, we offer:
- *A competitive compensation package, plus a sales incentive and bonus plan;*
- *A car plan; and,*
- *Extensive training opportunities to develop personal management, leadership and professional selling skills.*

Please fax or e-mail your resumé and recent 2x2 photo to:
meginc@globenet.com.ph
fax 638.6990

Philippine International Trading Corporation

A government corporation with 30 years of professional expertise in international trading is looking for a highly dynamic and competent individual to fill the position of

LEGAL OFFICER V

✓ male
✓ not over 40 years old
✓ Practising lawyer with 1-3 years experience in litigation/trial work
(experience in government is an advantage)
✓ At least 2 years in position/s involving management and supervision
✓ with 8 hours of training in management & supervision

Interested and qualified applicants may personally submit or send their comprehensive resume (with details of work experiences), latest ID picture, transcript of records, eligibility certificate to the

Philippine International Trading Corporation
PERSONNEL & TRAINING DEPARTMENT
4F NDC Bldg., 116 Tordesillas St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Karvine Consultants & Management, Inc.
Needs the following positions for immediate employment:

HR MANAGER / OFFICER
M/F; 30 - 35 yrs of age; Psychology graduate; graduate studies, a plus, w/ at least 4 yrs experience in hotel and restaurant operations; has the ability to conduct trainings; possesses strong leadership skills.

ACCOUNTING STAFF
Female, not more than 30 yrs old, Accounting graduate, with at least 2 yrs experience, computer literate, with restaurant background

RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR
M/F; 25-35 years of age; HRM Graduate; w/ at least 3 years experience in hotel or restaurant operations, can handle people w/ good communication skills.

WAITSTAFF
M/F, at least 21 yrs old, HRM graduate, with good exposure in Restaurant operations, with pleasing personality.

SENIOR CHEF / COOKS
M/F, 25 – 30 years of age; at least high school graduate; w/ 4 yrs Experience in hotel or restaurant operations.

Please submit resume with 2x2 picture and transcript of records to:
#6 Juan Luna St, San Lorenzo Village, Makati City
(Along Pasay Road, near Dusit Hotel)

BUDGET TRIPS ALL YEAR ROUND

Offices in Manila, Boracay
Angeles & Puerto Galera

Filipino Travel Center.

OFFER :
Dynamic team, Good salary, Opportunity to grow, Member PHILTOA, PTAA & DOT accr.

IMMEDIATE HIRING (MNL OFFC) :
- TICKET / RESERV. OFFCR
INBOUND
OUTBOUND, MIN. 2 YRS EXPERIENCE
- ACCOUNTING CLERKS

REQUIRE :
Honest personality, Good sales skills, Minimum supervision pre, Computer literate, English speaking.

Fax / submit personally your C.V. at:
G/F Ramona Appt Bldg., 1555 M. Adriatico Str., 1000 Ermita,
Mnl Tel: 528 45 04, 07 to 09 Fax : 528 45 03

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Bids & Awards Committee - I

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

KALAHI-CIDSS PROJECT
Loan Number 7147 PH

CONSULTING SERVICE FOR DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development toward the cost of the **Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services Project (KALAHI-CIDSS)**, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payment of professional services of a Development Communications Consultant.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development which is the lead implementing agency for this flagship project of the government in fighting poverty now invites Individual Proponents for the hiring of Development Communications Consultant for KALAHI-CIDSS Project.

The Contracting Agent will be responsible to the Project Manager to provide technical services in the development of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials of the KALAHI-CIDSS; KKB Project and in the process documentation of communities served by the Project.

Interested Proponents may submit their **Application Letters, Curriculum Vitaé and sample works** to the Bids & Awards Committee Secretariat at 2nd Floor, DSWD, Batasan Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City with Telephone Number: 951-7116 **until January 26, 2004 at 5:00 p.m.**

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson
Bids & Awards Committee-I

REGIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATE

World Vision International-Asia Pacific Regional Office (WVI-APRO), an international Christian humanitarian organization, is looking for a mature, self-motivated & experienced individual who can manage selected IT projects covering the Asia Pacific Region. WVI-APRO is based in Manila and works strategically with National Offices throughout the Asia Pacific Region (currently 20+ countries)

This will involve
- Testing, supporting and deployment of new applications across the Asia Pacific Region.
- It involves the training and coaching of IT coordinators in selected countries.
- Participating in the global forums to determine appropriate standards for IT in the context of World Vision's work.

Interested applicants must have the following qualifications:
- Requires a Bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems, Computer Science, Business Administration or technical training equivalent plus 3-5 years experience
- Experience with various MS Operating Systems, Cisco Firewalls, MS SQL and Lotus Notes is required; certification in any of these areas is preferred
- Must have strong analytical, problem-solving and organizational skills
- Requires ability to express some technically and functionally intensive concepts to lay users (verbally and/or in writing using primarily the English language) effectively in one-on-one as well as large group settings. Must have good facilitation skills
- Must have good communication and interpersonal skills in a cross-cultural setting
- Requires experience in project management, control and monitoring, knowledge of industry accepted documentation and application standards.
- Ability and willing to travel internationally up to 35%

You can send your CV to Mansse Lego by e-mail at: mansse_lego@wvi.org or by mail at PO Box 13664 Ortigas Center, Post Office, Pasig City 1605. Applications should be submitted no later than Jan 19, 2004

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inq7.net

is looking for Marketing Agents

INQ7.net is in need of determined and goal-oriented individuals who would like to take part in marketing INQ7 Yellowpages, the new service offering of INQ7.net. This position is open to freelancers/ part-timers, as well as to full-timers

Qualificatons:
- Graduate of Marketing or any business-related course
- Preferably has 1-2 years experience in sales and marketing; experience in online marketing a plus.
- Familiar with the Internet technology
- Possesses organizational and multi-tasking abilities
- Has above average presentation and communication skills (verbal and written)
- Has a positive mental attitude, sense of humor, and tenacious nature

Interested and qualified applicants may send their resumés in word format to
yellowpages@webphilippines.com

Reminders:
- Kindly indicate the word Freelance Marketing Agent in the subject heading of your e-mail.
- Kindly send your resumé only if you match the qualifications advertised (Resumés that DO NOT match the qualifications advertised will NOT be entertained).
- Keep your resumé file size minimal and compact. Pictures are not necessary for your e-mail resumé.

KLAVENESS Maritime Agency, Inc.
Accreditation No. POEA 25167-3 (expiry: 8 Dec 2007)
Urgently needs seastaff for its Principal,
Torvald Klaveness & Co. A.S, Oslo

BULKERS (Cement Carriers, Belt-unloaders, Trans-loaders)
- **1st ASSISTANT ENGINEER**
- **AB, OS, FITTER, MOTORMAN/OILER, WIPER** (no more than 35 y.o.)
- **CHIEF COOK** (no more than 45 y.o.)
  Applicants with crane handling and payloader driving experience is of advantage.

TANKERS (Chemical/oil, combination carriers Caustic/Alumina, Product Oil carriers)
- **MASTER** (oil tanker experience)
- **CHIEF ENGINEER** (oil/chemical tanker exp.)
- **1st ASST. ENGINEERS** (oil/chemical tanker exp.)
- **SECOND OFFICERS, THIRD OFFICERS, 2nd ASSISTANT ENGINEERS** (oil/chemical tanker exp.)

TCCC/NIS RATES & BENEFITS APPLY
Report to: 6/F, VNP Building, 479 Pedro Gil St., Ermita, Manila
(Recruitment Section) 523-6883. Send text to 0917-845-2621
No fees to be collected
Mag-ingat sa illegal Recruiter.

THE BEST COMPANIES NEED THE BEST PEOPLE. visit us at **www.jobmarketonline.com**

NURSES WANTED
FOR NEW YORK HOSPITALS

CGFNS Passers register immediately!

$500 Sign-On Cash Bonus!

We offer Highest Hourly Rates: $20-$40
Best terms and conditions.
No Placement Fee, salary deductions or any hidden fees.

Work in the world's greatest hospitals in New York.

Immediately hiring CGFNS passers & nurses awaiting CGFNS results.
Also assisting nurses in passing CGFNS and acquiring all necessary exams & certificates.

FREE:
- All Legal Fees
- Immigration Petition
- Visa & Green Card
- Relocation Flight to U.S.
- Housing in New York
- All Exam fees reimbursed

Contact Shaindy J, International Recruiter: PH: 718-387-8163
EMAIL: nurses@whiteglovecare.com, FAX Resume: 718-387-8359
Visit us online at www.whiteglovecare.com

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

COMPUTER OPERATOR

- ✓ Female
- ✓ Familiar with different MS OS and MS Office
- ✓ Knowledgeable with minor Software, Hardware and LAN troubleshooting
- ✓ With high analytical skills
- ✓ Not more than 26 years old
- ✓ With pleasing personality

* Proficient in MS Access is a **PLUS**

Contact Persons: Dess or Leandro
Call 896-0970, 896-0742/44

IMMEDIATE HIRING

Sales Executives / Sales Manager
- M/F, 35 yrs old below
- Grad of ME, EE or BS Chem.
- With exp in sales

Sales Trainee
- Male, 25 yrs old below
- Grad of any 4 year course
- Exp. in sales is an advantage

Gen. Clerk / Admin. Asst.
- Female, Single
- Grad. of any 4 yr course

Graphics Artist
- M/F, 22-29 yrs old
- Graduate of any 4 yr. course
- At least 6 mos. exp

Fashion Merchandiser
- M/F, 30 yrs old below
- Exp in garments merchandising

Driver
- Male, 35 yrs old below
- Must have at least 3 yrs exp
- Knowledge in automotive

Senior Buyer
- M/F, 21-30 yrs old
- Exp in garments buying
- Grad. of any 4 yr. course

Accounting Clerk
- M/F, 29 yrs old below
- Acctg Grad w/ 6 mos exp in acctg

Merchandiser
- Male, 28 yrs old below
- Must be at least 5'6"

Service Crew
- Male, 5'6" / Female, 5'2"
- With pleasing personality

Cutter / Pattern-Maker
- Female, 30 yrs old below
- Exp in pattern-making

Promodiser
- Female, 18-25 yrs old, 5'2"
- For M. Mla, Bulacan, & LP

Factory Worker
- Female 30 yrs old below
- At least HS grad, For Bulacan

GREAT VALUE MGT. SERVICES CORP.
G-02 The Regalia Park Tower Condominium
150 P. Tuazon St., Cubao, Quezon City
Tel Nos. 426-4626, 955-7053

OFFICE STAFF

Processing Staff & Computer Secretary
1. Female/ 20 to 35 / Mktng / Business Mgt / Comp Sci / Psych GRAD
2. Female/ Any course with very good computer knowledge/ Grad / Good English

Domestic Helper Trainor
1. Female / 25 to 35 yrs old / with or without overseas experience / Good English / with or without teaching background

CALL 729 2797 / 729 2802
TEXT 0917 527 7351
Look for MS. ROSE

A Dynamic Telecommunication Equipment distributor
is in need of the following :

Sales Supervisor
- male/female with at least 1-2 years Supervisory Sales experience is an advantage
- experience in office equipment, office automation, or telecommunication is a plus
- aggressive, self-starter and self-motivated
- salary package will depend on experience

Account Executives
- male/female, graduate of any course, not more than 35 years old
- willing to be trained, aggressive, motivated, self-starter
- salary, transpo allowance and high commission await qualified Account Executives

Technician
- male, technical course, not more than 30 years old, with license and can drive motorcycle
- with skills in electronic trouble shooting, know how to read schematic diagrams

Personally bring Resume with picture for interview
Monday to Wednesday 9-12 am, 1:30-4pm
5/F Enterprise Bldg., 524 Q. Paredes St., Binondo, Manila
(above Banco de Oro) near Binondo Church
or Email resumé to comlan@pacific.net.ph

MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES
DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Médecins Sans Frontiéres, a non-profit, international non-governmental humanitarian organization, is now in need for the street children project in Manila:

One (1) PSYCHOLOGIST

Qualifications:
- One year minimum experience with children, especially children in need of special protection is a requirement
- Clinical experience is a requirement (brief therapy and counseling techniques)
- Experience with children victims of abuse is advantage (trauma healing)
- Knowledge in family intervention and family counseling techniques
- Knowledge of children's rights
- Experience with street children is an advantage
- Gender sensitive
- Experience in an NGO is an advantage
- Willing to work in flexible time
- Fluent in Tagalog and English
- Interest to work in an interdisciplinary team (social and medical actions)

All application letters, comprehensive resumés with a recent 2x2 picture are to be mailed and addressed to:

Ms. Miena Osorio Montealegre
Project Coordinator
Street Children Project
Medecins Sans Frontières
#1519 F. Benitez Street, Paco, Manila
Email: msfch-sc@compass.com.ph

Deadline for submission: January 23, 2004

We are a company engaged in marketing of consumer products in the Philippines and currently searching for candidates for the following positions:

PRODUCT ASSISTANT (1)*
SALES EXECUTIVES (2)**
GENERAL CLERK (1)***

Male or Female
Between 20-26 years old
Graduate of Marketing or Business Management

* Preferably with previous product management background from reputable company
Preferably with own vehicle
The company will provide transportation allowance
Willing to work on field and beyond regular office hours

** Preferably with previous sales experience from a reputable company.
Must know how to drive and with a valid driver's license
Willing to work beyond regular office hours

*** Preferably Accounting graduate with experience from a reputable company
Willing to work beyond regular office hours

Fresh graduates are welcome to apply

Please mail resumé with picture and transcript at the address below
(No personal submission of credentials will be entertained)

Global Diversity Marketing, Inc.
Peterbilt Compound, Veterans Center
Taguig, Metro Manila

LICENSED NURSES

Apply immediately

Sta. Monica Hospital

Tel. 9978819

Administrative Assistant
Female 20-25 yrs old
Preferably College grad.
Computer literate
Speak good English, pleasing personality
Work flexible hrs.

Send/Bring resumé to
Greenhills Dental Place
#34 Wilson St.
San Juan, MM or
Fax 725-20-50 Attn: Grace

3D ANIMATORS NEEDED

Looking for 3d animators with excellent knowledge in 3d Studio Max, Adobe After Effects and Adobe Premiere. Knowledge in audio digital composition software is a plus. Email your resumés together with sample works at: jobs@dna.com.ph Subject: 3d Animator

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER NEEDED

Looking for an Administrative Officer to process and organize office documents, make client calls, and perform routing duties. Must be proficient with bookkeeping skills. Computer literate using Microsoft Office software. Email your resumés together with sample works at: jobs@dna.com.ph Subject: Administrative Officer

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Department of Health
SAN LAZARO HOSPITAL
Manila
Tel: 732-37-76 to 78 (Trunklines)
Fax No.: 711-69-79/711-6966

December 18, 2003

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS AT SAN LAZARO HOSPITAL

Medical Officer III (SG-18) OSEC-DOHB-722-1998, 724-1998, 729-1998, 734-1998, 736-1998, 738-1998, 745-1998, 751-1998, 753-1998, 754-1998, 755-1998, 756-1998

a) Doctor of Medicine b) Experience – None required c) Training (**Service**) – None required (**Fellow**) – Must have finished Residency Training in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery in an accredited Institution d) R.A. 1080 (Physician) e) Agency Requirement

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WANTED
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Qualifications:
1. College graduate
2. Computer literate
3. Possesses good communication skills
4. Salary negotiable

Submit resumé to PGH Medical Foundation, Inc. Philippine General Hospital, Taft Avenue, Ermita, Manila

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WANTED: LAPTOP TECHNICIAN (urgent)
- at least 2 years experience in repair & troubleshooting for laptop computers of any brand.
- Apply with resume & latest ID picture

EDP-ENTRY DATA POINT
C432 4th Flr CyberZone, Bldg. B,
SM Megamall, Mandaluyong
633-6367 to 68 Look for Ms. Joanne

IT Customer Care, Inc.
For Immediate Hiring

2 CUSTOMER SERVICE AGENT (Code: CSA)
- Fluent in English
- Male/Female, College Level/Graduate.
- Flexible and willing to work in shifts and during holidays.
- Experience as a call center agent an advantage.

1 PROGRAMMER (Code: PRG)
Required Proficiency: HTML, Java, JavaScript, ASP, PHP, JSP, MySQL
- Excellent in English communication skills. Male/ Female
- Graduate of BS Computer Science or related course.
- Mature, hardworking, trustworthy and can work with minimum supervision
- 2 years experience as programmer an advantage.
- Submit sample websites or work documents

Interested applicants may email their CV or Resume in MS Word format and send it to msabado@storesonline.com on or before January 12, 2004

WANTED IMMEDIATELY
SALES REPRESENTATIVES
- College level
- w/ pleasing personality
- w/ experience in selling food products

Apply in person w/ resumé & picture bet. 1-4 p.m. at

ESPA-FIL IMPORT & EXPORT CORP.
#5 Cordillera St. Mandaluyong City
(Back of Victor Potenciano Medical Center)

Get your career off the ground.

JOBMarket
www.jobmarketonline.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

The country's leading newspaper is looking for:

CIRCULATION COORDINATOR

Qualifications:
- Graduate of any Business Course
- With pleasing personality and excellent customer relations skills
- Articulate and dresses professionally

Responsibilities:
- Markets distribution of newspaper in hotels and restaurants
- Visits and monitors agents' sales performance

AUDIT SUPERVISOR

Qualifications:
- Accounting graduate, a Certified Public Accountant
- Preferably with MBA units
- 2 years experience in accounting and audit work, 1 year management experience
- Knowledge of General Accounting and Auditing Principles and Procedures
- Knowledge of Standards for Professional Practice of Internal auditing
- Knowledge of Financial Data analysis, Taxation, Labor Laws.

Responsibilities:
- Supervises audit project in order to ensure systems and procedures are implemented
- Audits based on IIA and dept standards to ensure compliance.
- Prepares communicates audit reports based on the evaluation/ findings and recommends appropriate actions.

CREDIT AND COLLECTION RECORDS ASSISTANT

Qualifications:
- Accounting graduate
- At least 1 year experience in same field or jobs leading to it.

Responsibilities:
- Prepares Credit Memo/Debit Memo Reports
- Reconciles accounts and applies payment of Accounts Receivables to ensure the efficient flow of work in the Credit and Collection Department.

DRIVER

Qualifications:
- High School graduate
- Holder of a professional driver's license
- 1-2 years experience in collection work or similar field

Responsibilities:
- Responsible for driving light company vehicles to transport office personnel, supplies or materials to local or long distance passage

Mail your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Chino Roces Avenue
(formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets,
Makati City

E-mail: recruitment@inquirer.com.ph

GEAR UP FOR THE 1ST QUARTER 2004 STORM!
TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE WITH RECOGNIZED PRACTICIONERS AND RESPECTED SPEAKERS IN THE FIELD OF MARKETING, SALES AND LEADERSHIP SERVICING!

UNIQUE ADVANTAGES :

⇨ Lead Speaker is Mr. Ricardo de Vera, MBA and recognized for his creative and motivational style in conducting work changing skills seminars/cutting-edge training to numerous audiences both here and abroad. He is a **Certified International Trainor** from Singapore, **Director** of the Phil. Marketing Association, **Resource Trainor/Consultant** to the Philippine Training Center of Dept. of Trade & Industry and ASEAN Center of Excellence. **Author** and business/leadership **Writer.**

⇨ Workshops/seminars based on international standards/guidelines an adapted to the Philippine audience and business settings.

⇨ **Most competitive and reasonable fees : seminars and in-house workshops.**

1ST QUARTER SEMINARS:

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Brag for career success

By Ernie O. Cecilia

DID you ever wonder why some people get more attention than others? Did you ever feel that you are just a face in the crowd? How can others get promoted so easily for meager accomplishments while you labor so much and never get noticed by your boss?

Success fallacies

In this world, there are a few convenient fallacies and myths that stand in the way of the assertiveness that is a necessary ingredient for success, whether in career or business. Since our formative years and whenever convenient for our superiors, we are always reminded to focus on simply doing our job. We are told that our performance will speak for itself.

Let me tell you the bad news–it doesn't. In fact, one instance of a poor performance is more noticed than a series of good performances.

Your superiors, customers, teachers and everybody who are apt to judge your performance, product or service look forward to an acceptable level of performance. When you turn out something that they expect, they don't even notice it. When you are polite, alert and have the knack of showing your best smile as a service crew, your customer does not even respond to your sweet "Thank you and have a good day, Sir." You're never noticed, unless you louse up your job.

> 'To make a difference, be different. Don't be just a face in the crowd–you must stand out to get noticed'

Get noticed

Here's another bad piece of news. You'll never get appreciated or recognized unless you are first noticed. From the time you attempt to join a company, you'll never get noticed unless you send in a great resume that truly sells the idea that of the thousands of job applicants, you are the one they're looking for. If your resume is the same run of the mill that everybody else submits, you'll never get noticed.

So brag about what you have done and what you can do for the company you want to join. Remember that the recruitment officer's job is not to give you a job, but to fill in a vacancy with someone that has the competencies required to do the job. So, brag about the competencies you have, not the color of your eyes or hair. Help the recruitment officer notice your competencies by highlighting them, not hiding them from him. But, brag about what you only have. People notice it when you're faking it.

In your career or business, opportunities to shine and make a difference abound. Don't wait for the opportunities to come to you—go after them, create them if you have to. Never wait to be discovered—if you have talent, flaunt it. To make a difference, be different. Don't be just a face in the crowd–you must stand out to get noticed.

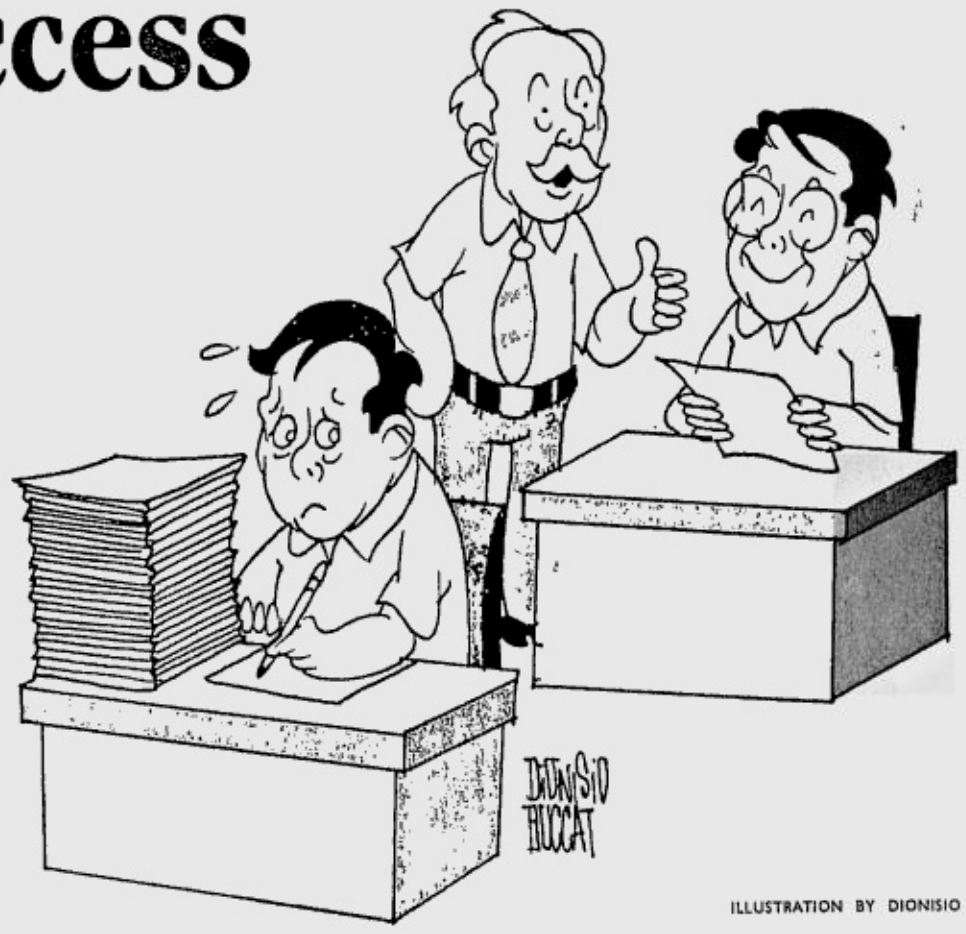
False humility

Most of the people who succeed don't do what the rest of humanity does–consume. Successful people produce ideas, products or services that distinguish themselves from others. In fact, some of them simply don't conform. Others even brag about their non-conformity. Les Reyes, younger brother of the famous Ricky Reyes, developed a successful pattern for a beauty salon business and bragged about the idea that people don't have to reinvent the wheel if they want to be in that business. He advertised his success in magazines, so that others might taste the same sweet success. Today, he has more than 180 franchisees.

It is not enough to do a good job. You must learn to crow about it in a way that you don't sound obnoxious to others. The Asian culture admonishes that we be humble in our dealings with others. While I agree with that, I don't subscribe to false humility.

Whenever people notice that I look younger now than five years ago, I acknowledge and thank them, sometimes by jokingly complimenting them for their excellent eyesight. If that

BRAGGI4



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'I am not inspired to find a job'

Advices FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

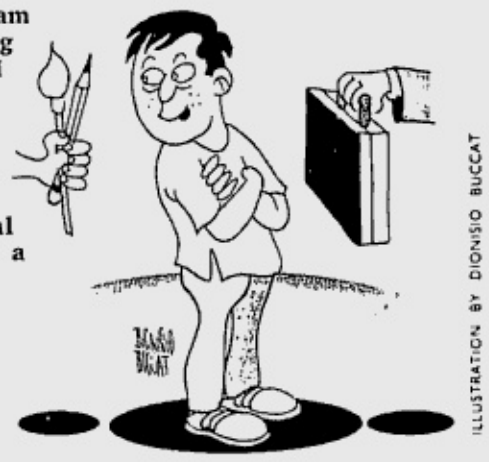
By Tita Datu Puangco

I FIND your advice really helpful, especially when you say, "Do not do anything you don't want to do." I am a graduating student (this October) although I am not sure I will make it. My diploma has long been overdue. It seems like I have lost what little inspiration I have. Yes, I do want to start looking for a job but I am not too enthusiastic about it. I can't seem to picture myself in a business attire staying in closed offices, 8 to 5, all weekdays.

I keep thinking there must be a way somehow not to compromise what I want and what I need. I need to start mapping out a career and earn my keep since I am getting older without accumulating job experiences. I want a job where I can feel I am doing something worthwhile. I want to do something, especially in the arts. I am interested in the arts although I lack the formal credentials like a diploma in arts. It is my fascination.

What advice would you give me in my state of mind? Is this my idealism working? If so, is it bad for me to have high expectations at this early stage? Thanks and more power.

Hopeless Artist Wannabe



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Thank you for your letter. It is a sign that you are reflecting and processing your current situation. It is also a sign that you are restless to move forward, but you are in your comfort zone as a student and therefore have difficulty trying to assess what you want and therefore what you need to do.

We have a new year ahead of us. This is a good time for you to think in terms of the career you desire. Career planning is both a rational and emotional process. As Filipinos, we tend to be carried away by our emotion, by our feelings, by the need for "inspiration," but let us remember that on top of our heart is our head. Our brains should be able to balance the rational and the creative in us. Then, after profound reflection and understanding of what we want, we have to exercise our will to act and get things done.

So, how do you address your dilemma around career? Let me suggest a number of steps

IAMNOT/G15

A pat in the back

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

ALL of us get tickled when the boss gives us a pat in the back. I do not mean to trivialize today's gospel focus, but that is what it reminds me of in the workplace: a pat in the back. That line about the voice from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased," does recall to mind the instances that I have received a pat in the back from my bosses through the years—and what I'd done to deserve it.

But bosses are not gods, and for everybody's sake, we ought to be discerning in pleasing our bosses. There are as many ways to please the boss as there are many kinds of bosses. As they say, "Different folks, different strokes." Blessed are you if your boss is a principled person who does not only work to build a positive public image of himself but is also truly guided by the highest ideals and takes pains to translate his beliefs into reality. But what if he or she is one of those who are fueled by delusions of grandeur, who have so many hang-ups, and who use subordinates to prop their image? Will you be forced by circumstance to compete with others who suck up to him in order to get a pat in the back (and a promotion)? Or will you valiantly expose your boss's faults, stick to your guns and lose your job?

When quitting is not an option, the worker who is worth his salt seeks ways to do what is right without being self-righteous. Remember, even the bossiest boss in the world is still accountable to the Ultimate Boss—our Father in heaven. To make a difference at work, we must look for the ways to please our heavenly boss without displeasing the earthly one. Difficult, indeed, but nothing is impossible for one who believes. *(Email the author at* avemaria@csi.com.ph*)*

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Gospel Luke 3:15-16. 21-22

And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Affirmation in work

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB,DD

WHEN Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, He made public His work and mission. In that event, the Heavenly Father affirmed Him through a voice, which came from heaven saying "You are my beloved Son: with you I am well pleased." I can imagine that such loving affirmation by the Father strengthened and motivated Jesus to fulfill His work.

Every worker likewise needs affirmation in his job. One needs to know whether he is doing well with his work or whether others are pleased with his services. A secretary will certainly feel "high" if the boss sincerely tells others in the office that he has the "best secretary in the world!" A manager definitely performs very well and continues improving his leadership when he feels the support and loyalty of his workers. When there is mutual affirmation among workers and between workers and management, the whole workplace becomes a beloved place where everyone is pleased to stay.

The reality in the workplace however, is sometimes far from being a pleasant one. There are many instances when one does not feel acknowledged in his work, much less appreciated. The worker who gives his best and does not feel affirmed in his performance could easily get discouraged in his job, but he may not be if he believes that there is Someone in heaven who knows every single act he does and appreciates him for what he is and what he does. Believing in our Father in heaven will make us "hear" His loving affirmation of us, His children! *(Email the author at* mfvg@skyinet.net*)*

How do you deal with narcissist boss?

DEAR WW: My boss is the most self-centered person I've ever met. Do you have any tips on how to survive a boss who has an ego the size of the Sears Tower?
Lonely Near The Top

WORKING WOUNDED
Bob Rosner

Did you celebrate last year's "World Animal Day?" I missed it, but apparently it was a big deal in Turkey. Such a big deal, in fact, that when employees at the Izmir hospital heard that State Minister Yuksel Yalova would be visiting that day, they went whole hog in planning a celebration. They even slaughtered a lamb in his honor.

Fortunately, Yalova stopped them before they got the second lamb. But it sounds like your boss doesn't mind seeing others sacrificed to his glory. There's not much you can do to change his personality, but there ARE some things you can do to ease your dealings with him and protect your skin. The tips below will help you cope. For more, check out "Narcissistic Leaders," an article in the Jan/Feb '00 issue of the Harvard Business Review (reprint R00105).

Can you provide your own gratification? Narcissists are good at taking the glory, not giving it, so stop expecting your boss to compliment or reward your efforts. This doesn't mean that you should do any less to look out for her, but that you must learn to get your strokes from other places.

Do you avoid flattery? People often deal with a narcissist boss by stroking their egos and agreeing unquestioningly with everything they say and do. But many narcissists can spot a person sucking up to them a mile away. Your boss will probably respect you more if you avoid flattery and cultivate a reputation as a straight shooter.

Can you learn to live with the fact that he'll take credit for your ideas? Unfortunately, sharing credit doesn't come naturally to narcissists. (A boss of mine once took full credit for a magazine article I wrote, so I speak from experience.) What seems so normal to most of us, sharing credit, is not part of the game plan for most narcissists. This is one thing you'll just have to learn to live with.

Can you show him why your views benefit him? Bosses like yours usually have one way to do your job—THEIR way. To get YOUR way considered, describe it in terms of its benefits to HIM.

Are you good with time management? With a narcissistic boss, your plate probably fills up faster than the plate of a starving person at a buffet. So take a time management course and get organized, or be prepared to eat, sleep and breathe your job.

Is your resume ready? There are plenty of sane bosses out there. Network like crazy and eventually you'll find a boss who has enough self-confidence that he or she doesn't need to trample on yours.

Follow these tips and you won't have to worry about being anyone's sacrificial lamb.

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com poll: If you had to work for a narcissist, which of the following would be your favorite saying?

—"Exactly how high should I jump?," 13.1%,

—"No way, Jose," 35%

—"I'll give it my best shot," 51.8%

(Bob Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. Email him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

'Narcissists are good at taking the glory, not giving it, so stop expecting your boss to compliment or reward your efforts'

Brag for career success

From page G13

happened before my "age of enlightenment," I would have done either of two things—denied it or reflected the compliment. That's what we were trained to do with a compliment. We were misled into believing that to be humble, we should not accept compliments. Remember how you said, "Oh, you look lovely, too" (reflection) or "Oh, that's nothing, everybody looks as great" (denial) when people noticed the effects of your new skin care routine.

There are great opportunities for ensuring that you get noticed at work or in business. First, realize that in your career you are only as good as your last performance. Harry Houdini, the great escape artist, knows this too well. Second, make every task a work of art worth your signature on it. Do it right the first time, whether it is a big or small thing. People are watching both what you do and how you do it. Third, be proud to tell your bosses about it, and in the process, thank them for their guidance and support. Fourth, if asked to submit an accomplishment report, highlight quality not quantity of work done. Fifth, focus on high-impact, high-visibility projects and tasks. Sixth, don't forget the line of sight between what you do and the bottom line for your company or your boss. At the end of the day, what you do must have some direct significance to your company's results or your superior's goals. Seventh, be in the right place at the right time, not necessarily in the limelight, but where the powers that be can see your good deeds.

In business, it is easier to know whom to please—the customer. Build your organization around the customer. Do only those tasks that lead to the satisfaction of your customers. Spend more time with your customers than your competitor does. Know your customers' business intimately. Don't just be a vendor—be a business partner to your customer. Tell him what you know of his business and brag that you can help make him succeed—reduce his costs, cycle time and risks. Then, you make good what you brag about.

Bragging about the right things enhances your self-confidence, self-esteem and public image. Before you brag, be sure that you can deliver what you commit. Develop mastery of your craft, keep abreast with technology and world developments, and learn to achieve personal mastery. (The latter is more difficult to achieve, but I'll attempt to write about it in the coming issues.)

So, if you want to succeed in your career or business, don't just do a great job. Learn the art of bragging because performance does not speak for itself. It must be seen and heard by the right eyes and ears. Don't wait to be discovered. Great products don't automatically sell—they are advertised everyday. If you think you're really that great, don't just sit there—sell yourself to your customers, to your superiors and to whoever will decide to give you a greater career or bigger business.

(Mr. Cecilia is the president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center, a business and human resources consulting firm. He is a past president of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines. Email him at erniec@edsamail.com.ph.)

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HR work changes people, companies

By Candy G. Villanueva

NOT a lot of people can claim to have a defining moment. That moment is that specific time when one realizes exactly what he or she wants in life. Gigs Patanao remembers her exact defining moment. "I remember the exact moment when I realized that this was the career for me. I was assisting my boss in a program we were doing as part of the officers training of one of the banks. The module was on managing change. I was amazed at the power of the HR role to influence and shape the course of events in an organization, even in an individual's life."

PHOTO BY RANDY HORNILLOSA

PATANAO, Aboitiz Transport System's HR Archi Manager

Career choice

From then on, Patanao crafted her career in a way that allowed her to influence the course of events in an organization. She chose human resources as her career and Aboitiz Transport System as the company,. Formerly known as WG&A Philippines, Aboitiz Transport System is the company that aims to transport passengers safely and enjoyably from one Philippine island to the other via the great blue waters.

As Human Resources for Results Architecture Management Team Leader (HR Archi Manager), Patanao is responsible for manpower planning, organization structure and design and strategic staffing. "My task is to make sure that policies and processes are in place to ensure that the organization is staffed with the right number and quality of people, doing the kind of work the organization needs and the team member enjoys, so that together, we achieve the goals we all set out to achieve both at an organizational and a personal level," shares Patanao.

Patanao also provides HR consultancy services to Aboitiz Transport System's SuperCargo Division as HR partner.

Hailing from Ormoc, Leyte, Patanao moved to Cebu to earn a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Science at the University of San Carlos. Ranking number one in her graduating class, Patanao moved to Manila for her master's in Industrial Psychology at the De La Salle University.

HR Focus

Experience

Her baptism in the HR field took place at Corporate and Career Consultants, Inc., where she worked as program administration coordinator. In this postion, she first learned about training programs and HR systems. Her quick and steady climb on the HR ladder brought her from coordinator, training assistant and then as HR development officer.

Patanao continued to learn the business by working for big and reputable companies in Manila like the Philippine Educational Trust and Pension Plans, Inc., Uniwide Sales Inc., RFM Corporation, Coca-Cola Bottlers, Phils. and Intel Technologies before she finally docked on the welcoming port of Aboitiz Transport System. Aside from immersing herself in the business, she furthered her knowledge by taking up Civil Law at the University of Santo Tomas.

Although based in Manila, Patanao never lost her Visayan charm. "My Visayan sense of humor always allows me to see the funny side of situations and people," Patanao shares with a smile. "I can relate to all kinds of people and I get things done." According to her, her sharp perception allows her to easily recognize an issue before it surfaces. Patanao makes sure she is always prepared for whatever situation she is faced with.

Fun at work

Patanao extends humor and fun further to her team. "I always make sure everyone in the team is having fun. It becomes slavery when it's not fun anymore." But before anyone thinks of taking off their thinking caps and letting their hair down, Patanao balances the relaxed atmosphere by seeking out maturity and responsibility. "I always work on the assumption that I work with adults. Kids don't last very long in my team," reasons the team leader. "They either stay and take the challenge to grow up or they play in a different ballpark."

Finally, Patanao values independence from her people. With a keen and strict eye on hiring, she only chooses the best. Having chosen them herself, she believes in the capability of her people. "You hired thinking beings so let them loose in their jobs. Nothing quells enthusiasm and passion for work faster than being reduced to an order taker."

Career journey

Patanao urges the youth to carve his or her own path and not to follow someone else's flight. After all, we all have our own unique journeys to map and follow. "Just make sure that in your own individual journeys, you bring along a store of courage, confidence, integrity, energy, openness, sense of fun and most of all humility," advises Patanao. "In order for one not to lose his or her way," Patanao stresses, "it is important to stay grounded as a person." Staying grounded for Patanao means not sacrificing one's family, friends and most of all, oneself.

Patanao also makes sure her work does not consume her life by encouraging a healthy well-rounded lifestyle. She loves to read and travel. She's been to Europe and all over Asia. But when she's not lugging her travel bags across the world on her free time, Patanao likes to spend quiet moments with her family or enjoys taking long drives, swimming and watching plays, ballet and concerts.

'I am not inspired...'

From page G13

that you could take. First, make sure you graduate from your current course. The job market today is very competitive with many bright graduates. A company would prefer to hire a college graduate rather than a college dropout. It does not matter what your current course is all about. It does not matter if midway the course you desired to make a shift but you pursued it without your heart in it. My belief is all learning is valuable. You may not have a functional use for what you studied right now. But in the future you will realize that you are able to draw from your memory bank like digging up a gem in a treasure chest.

Visualize your career

Second, develop your vision. You want to be an artist. Try to imagine how you would like to be living your life in five years time. Put your vision down in writing. How much would you be earning? Would you have a family by then? What competencies in skills, knowledge, attitudes and habits should you possess to be successful on the job? How would the market look like, what would be the demand for your artistic pursuits? What are the strategic moves you need to do to get you to your vision?

Third, review your current situation realistically. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What is your current economic capability? If there is an urgency to work and earn, what are the possibilities open to you given your current competencies? What are the three actions you could take to land a job?

For fresh graduates, I recommend in the first few years (even if they dream of becoming entrepreneurs or working on their own in the future) for them to get a regular job. Why? Well, because a regular job enables a person to embrace a certain level of discipline. It is also a clear transition point from the life of a student to a life of a member of the workforce. This is what the "8 to 5, all weekdays" life is all about.

Learn through exposure

Do not get scared but be challenged by the routine. Every job is a learning experience that adds value to your person. It also has the potential to enhance your resume that will lead you to your ideal job. Working makes you experience the different operating systems that produce efficiency and productivity. It enables you to manage your time, energy and resources. Then, there is your concern about having to don a business suit. Most companies have adopted smart casual as business attire. In a number of industries like call centers or transcription companies where there is little face to face interaction with clients, management have opted for clothes that are cozy and comfortable.

Fourth, develop a career plan. Make a list of all the job experiences, exposure and competencies that you want to acquire for year one, year two, etc. Develop milestones for each year. This transition plan will enable to meet your day-to-day needs in a regular job, at the same time move you closer and closer to your vision.

Finally, which mindset to take? View working as an adventure, not as something routine and boring. Be proactive, do not wait for things to happen to you. Make things happen. Happy New Year! God bless.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through email to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph or fax to 892-2902.)

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Review accounts to ensure compliance with corporate standards and accuracy in preparation for public audits.

Oversee preparation of monthly payroll, expenses statements, reimbursements etc., in line with company policies and government regulations.

Assist in the development of strategic plans, annual budgets, statutory record keeping and monitor necessary progress.

Analyze and interpret all financial and budget reports and recommend efficiency improvements to lower the costs of the organization.

Recommend to management improvements to the methods and procedures of the accounting process.

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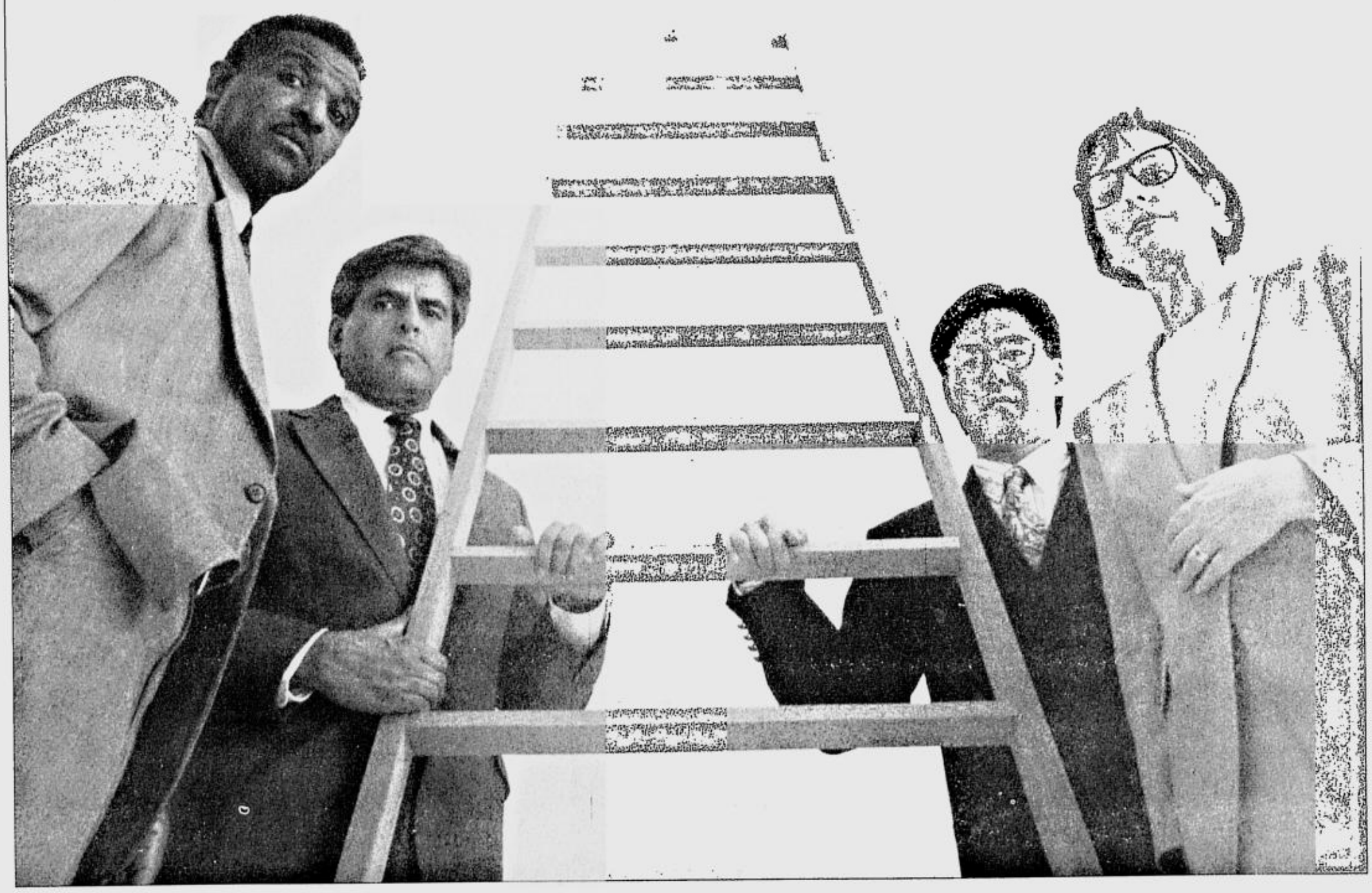

Palace shrugs off snub by leftists on peace talks bid

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Senators say delay in polls 'explosive'

But Drilon says it's all speculation

By Christine O. Avendaño and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A DAY after Senate President Franklin Drilon discussed the possible postponement of the May 10 elections, the man he wants as the new majority leader took an opposite stance.

Administration Sen. Francis Pangilinan said postponing the polls would be "politically explosive."

"It would be like sitting on a political powder keg," Pangilinan said in a statement.

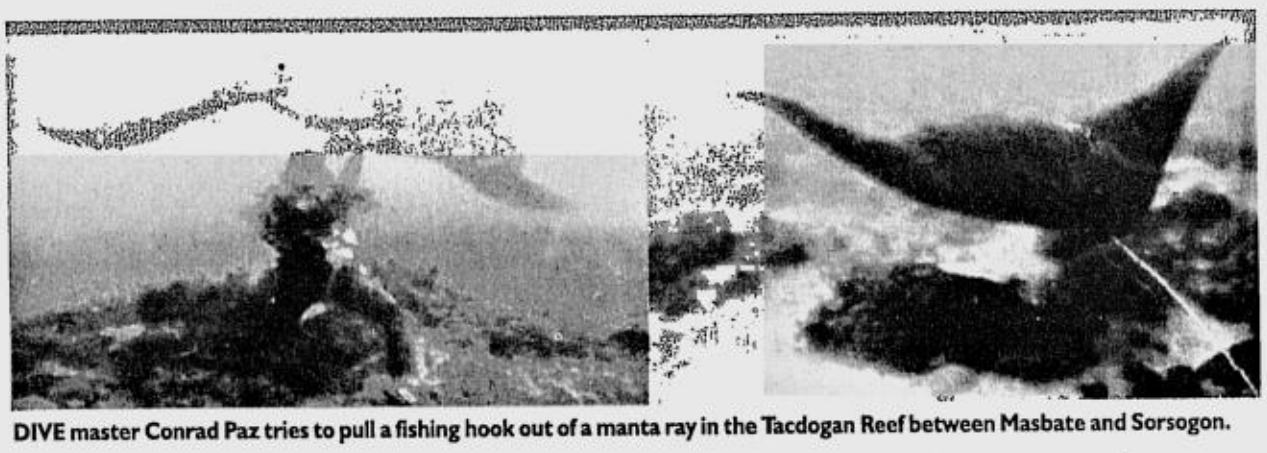
Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., himself a candidate of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, warned of dire consequences if the elections were delayed, including the imposition of martial law or a military takeover.

Drilon, who only pointed out that postponement was legally feasible, said yesterday that the new majority bloc in the Senate would meet in a caucus to discuss the consequences of the imminent Supreme Court ruling on the automated elections.

"We will discuss the consequences on the possible effects [of an adverse high court ruling] because it's all speculation at this point," Drilon said in a phone interview.

In a statement, Pimentel said that any suspension of the May 10 polls would delay the assumption to office of the duly elected president and other officials, and thus "questions may be raised on the constitutionality of the continued stay of national and local officials beyond the end of their terms on June 30."

SENATORS SAY/ A4



DIVE master Conrad Paz tries to pull a fishing hook out of a manta ray in the Tacdogan Reef between Masbate and Sorsogon.

Haven of rare manta rays found

By Ronnie Lorejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

MONREAL, Masbate—A haven for manta rays has been discovered in a reef between Sorsogon and Masbate provinces, but a group of divers that found the location fear that the gentle creatures will disappear if illegal fishing continues.

Conrad Paz, an international dive master, said the haven was 15 km from Bulan, Sorsogon, and 10 km from the nearest point of Monreal town on Ticao Island in Masbate.

The manta rays, considered endangered pelagics or ocean creatures, are found in the Tacdogan Reef, which the divers call the "manta bowl" because it abounds in these majestic sea giants.

Five to 10 hectares of the reef, with an average depth of 17.5 meters, is submerged in the middle of the treacherous Ticao Pass. "That's why it is also known as a sunken reef," Paz said.

The shallowest area is recorded at about 8 meters. The reef is flat, with patches of stony coral

HAVEN/ A8

Senators hold caucus today on fate of Cha-cha

By Christine O. Avendaño and Carlito Pablo

THE NEW Senate majority will hold a caucus today to determine the fate of the suddenly resurrected bid for Charter change.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday the majority bloc—now without Sen. Loren Legarda but with Senators John Osmeña and Rodolfo Biazon—will discuss whether Congress still has time to pass a law creating a constitutional convention (Con-con).

Speaker Jose de Venecia has urged the Senate to rush passage of a bill that would provide for the simultaneous election of Con-con delegates during the May 10 polls.

The House, which passed a bill last year seeking constitutional amendments through a constituent assembly, has to pass a new measure to push the Con-con mode. The Senate has yet to deliberate on a bill endorsed by the Senate committee on amendments, which proposes a convention.

In a phone interview, Drilon reiterated anew his doubts that the Con-con measure would be passed in time and, if so, whether there would be enough time for the Commission on Elections to prepare for the election of Con-con delegates.

"Even if we pass the measure, the Comelec has to set a deadline for the filing of the certificates of candidacy of the delegates," Drilon said.

He noted that the Comelec advanced the deadline for the filing of the certifi-

SENATORS HOLD/ A22

Court decision letting Estrada go to US is a joke

By Jovito R. Salonga and Florin T. Hilbay

COMMENTARY

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Former Senate President Jovito R. Salonga is currently the chair of Kilosbayan, a nongovernment organization, and the president of Bantay Katarungan, another NGO. Florin T. Hilbay is an assistant professor at the University of the Philippines College of Law.)

THE SANDIGANBAYAN special division trying former President Joseph Estrada for plunder had three basic options with respect to his request for medical treatment abroad: (1) to deny his request to travel and undergo any operation in the United States, (2) to grant entirely his request and allow him to have an operation in the United States by the doctor of his choice, Christopher Mow, but lose its jurisdiction over Estrada; and (3) to partially grant his request by agreeing to an operation by Mow or, alternatively, by the best Filipino surgeons available on the condition that it be done in the Philippines.

We believe that the court's having chosen the second option on Dec. 23, 2000, unless reconsidered and set aside, is a grave error which may no longer be corrected once Estrada is able to leave for the United States. We favor the third option, out of compassion for Estrada but without Philippine courts losing jurisdiction over him.

Last Dec. 23, the Sandiganbayan, through the five-member special division, granted Estrada's second motion to travel for medical reasons. This decision (or resolution) is a complete reversal of the position taken by the same court,

COURT/ A22

'COMPAÑERA'

Bet seeks late dad's post

LAWYER Pia Cayetano wants to follow in footsteps of late Sen. Rene Cayetano.

By Volt Contreras

WAS IT an omen or just plain jitters?

Pia Cayetano swears she had never suffered an injury in the marathons she had run or the mountains she had climbed all these years.

But when she and the other senatorial candidates of the administration's K-4 ticket filed their candidacy papers before the Commission on Elections last week, she sprained her left ankle from an off-balance step she took in wading through the thick crowd of supporters.

The 37-year-old lawyer and eldest child of the late Sen. Renato "'Compañero" Cayetano was thus limping on her first few days as a bona fide politician.

In more sense than one, she had hopped onto uncertain ground.

Unlike her two younger brothers—Allan Peter, who is the

BET/ A22

Lea sings to Robert at their wedding

By Janet and Ruben Nepales
LA correspondents

LOS ANGELES—It was probably her most memorable entrance. Smiling and laughing, she walked down the church aisle decorated with fragrant red roses and softly flickering candles. And then for a moment, at the sight of him, she held her breath.

Lea Salonga, the Philippines' Tony and Laurence Olivier award-winning singer and actress, wed Chinese-American businessman Robert Chien Saturday afternoon in a ceremony that was deliberately simple, yet invariably high on emotion.

The wedding Mass, held at the starkly beautiful Cathedral of our Lady of the Angels, played out like a touching musical. *(See related story in Entertainment.)*

While waiting for the ceremony to begin, a smiling Chien, huddled in a corner with his best man, Eric Putz, and groomsmen, told the INQUIRER he was "excited, nervous and dizzy."

The altar was also abloom with red roses and lit with candles. The guests, who all sported gold ribbons, sat in the front half section of the nave, while a predominantly Filipino crowd, mostly Salonga's fans, filled the rear section.

With tight security and a TV crew recording the proceedings, there was an extra charge of excitement. The proces-

LEA SINGS/ A9

LEA Salonga and Robert Chien greet well-wishers during their wedding at the Our Lady of Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles. PHOTOS BY JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

Erap loses another bosom buddy

By Christian V. Esguerra and Volt Contreras

ANOTHER close friend of deposed President Joseph Estrada has deserted him.

Former Caloocan Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr., his bosom buddy for nearly half a century, said he was breaking his political and personal ties to Estrada.

Asistio claimed he and Estrada never had any serious disagreement but hinted at a string of clashes that slowly convinced him that it would be better not to have anything to do with the former President anymore.

"He has long deserted me, probably because I was no longer in power," said Asistio in an interview on Thursday. His 11-year stint as Caloocan mayor ended in 1995.

ERAP LOSES/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2004
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers mostly over the eastern sections.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/12/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Palace shrugs off snub by leftists

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christian V. Esguerra

MALACAÑANG yesterday shrugged off the communist rebels' move to ignore the peace initiatives of President Macapagal-Arroyo, claiming that they would have to deal with her anyway since she would win this year's elections.

In an interview over RMN radio, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that if officials of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army insisted on shutting out the President, they would have to wait a long time, probably 2010, before they could forge a peace agreement with the President of their choice.

"In my view, the President would still win the elections so they have to wait until 2010 or when a new president is elected to start negotiations with the government," Bunye said. "Baka abutin sila ng siyam-siyam sa kahihintay" (They may have to wait forever).

Top CPP-NPA officials earlier said they were only interested in hearing the peace initiatives of movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., religious leader Bro. Eddie Villanueva and former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

The leftist group Bayan Muna also snubbed the President by inviting only Poe, Villanueva and Roco to attend its convention this week at the Bahay ng Alumni at the University of the Philippines Diliman campus.

Bayan Muna claimed that it could mobilize up to two million votes to support the presidential candidate of its choice. In the 2001 elections, Bayan Muna garnered the highest number of votes among party-list groups.

Despite the snub from the Reds and their continued attacks and extortion activities, Bunye said the President remains open to holding peace talks with the CPP-NPA in the first quarter of this year to ensure.

The President yesterday condemned the NPA's attack on a coal-fired plant in Calaca, Batangas, and ordered the armed forces and Philippine National Police to go on high alert against any threat from the NPA.

On the NPA's collection of permit to campaign fees, Bunye called on all candidates to reject this blatant extortion by the rebels.

But the call is apparently being ignored by politicians.

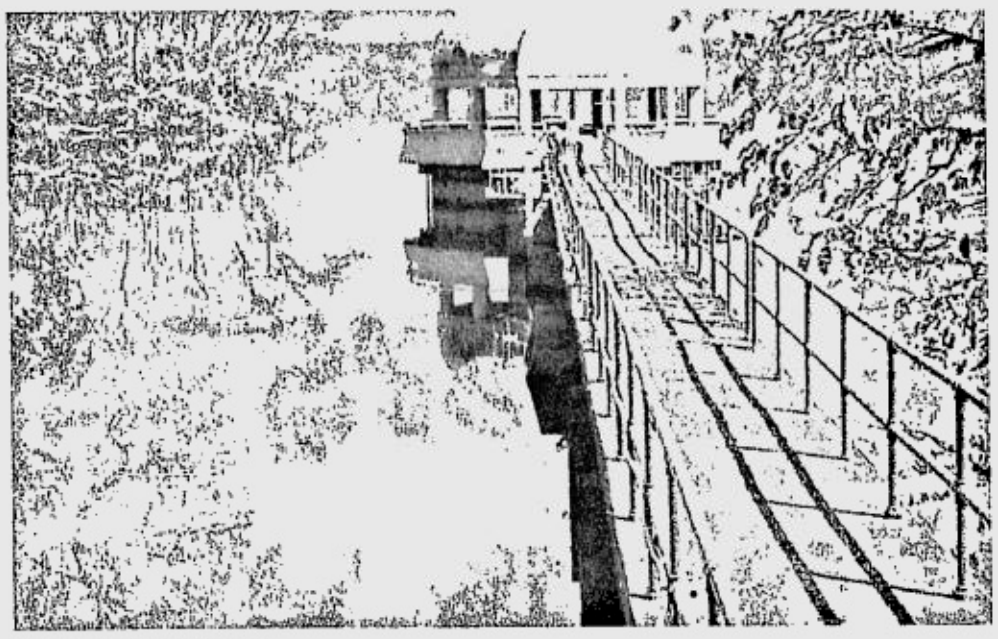
Yesterday, the military reported that several unidentified politicians from Albay and Camarines Sur have volunteered to pay "permit-to-campaign" fees to communist rebels.

The politicians went to Barangay Tatas in Ligao City, Albay to personally pay the dues but were reportedly told to return only after they had raised the full amount which could be in the form of cash, firearms and mobile phones.

The AFP has deployed members of the 22nd Infantry Battalion to Ligao and peripheral areas for security.

"We would also like to inform our candidates that the AFP is serious in providing an environment where they could campaign without any fear of being harmed by the NPA," military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Both police and the military have stepped up operations against communist rebels after they began collecting campaign fees nationwide. *With a report from Carlito Pablo*



WATER WOES SEEN
Several days after media reported the threateningly low water level at the Angat Dam in Bulacan, the level at the La Mesa Dam also showed signs of dipping, forecasting a long, hot summer for Metro Manilans. RUCY ESPERAS

DFA in the dark on peace talks

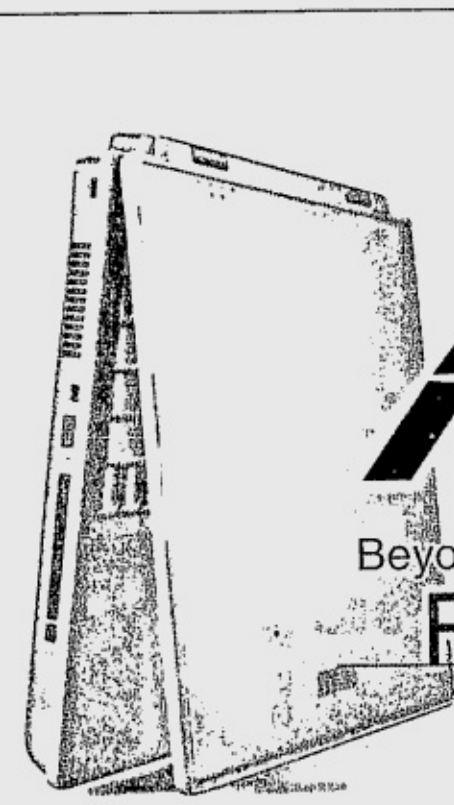
THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs does not know exactly when the Malaysian-brokered peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front would start.

In a recent press conference, new Foreign Secretary Delia Albert said she had no idea when the peace talks would begin. Nor did she have an explanation as to why they have been apparently delayed.

Her predecessor, the late Blas Ople, said the negotiations were to begin in the first week of January but would be preceded by the arrival of a cease-fire monitoring team from Malaysia and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Albert merely said she was "confident" that the formal peace talks with the MILF, as well as that with the communist rebels, would be held "shortly." She added that she was determined to continue mobilizing the diplomatic resources of the government in pursuing the peace process with the secessionists.

"We will continue to engage the international community in strengthening the peace process in very specific ways—by preventing rebels from courting international support, focussing development assistance in conflict and post-conflict areas, and working closely with our partners in the international community who are helping us broker the peace," the secretary said. *Jerome Aning*



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Gov't will help Poe settle citizenship issue, says GMA

By Gil C. Cabacungan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday took up the cudgels for embattled actor Fernando Poe Jr. whose citizenship has been questioned before the Commission on Elections.

"I believe that Fernando Poe Jr. is a Filipino. I have no reason to doubt his being a Filipino in heart and spirit," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

The President said she was prepared to help Poe prove his citizenship.

"If he needs any official documents or evidence to fight his case, the government is prepared to help him. Nevertheless, a case has been filed and let the court come out with its own findings and judgment," the President said.

A lawyer has filed a petition seeking to disqualify Poe from the presidential race, claiming that the actor was not a natural-born Filipino citizen and, thus, could not run for president.

"He has lived and worked in the country his entire career and no one had ever questioned his citizenship until now," said the President, who had been suspected of having a hand in the petition filed against Poe since she stood to benefit the most from his disqualification.

Poe, who has been leading all presidential surveys, is seen by Malacañang as the biggest stumbling block to Ms Macapagal's bid to win a six-year term.

Aside from Poe, Malacañang is also strongly suspected of being behind moves to disqualify evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, a former staunch supporter of the President, who it is widely believed would snatch votes away from Ms Macapagal.

In an interview with RMN radio, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Poe has to show documents to prove his citizenship.

"It's important that right from the start, there is a resolution on this issue," Bunye said.

Lawyer Victorino Fornier filed a petition with the Comelec on Friday questioning Poe's citizenship since his father, Allan, had Spanish parents while his mother, Bessie Kelley, was an American.

This time, Comelec asked to disqualify Eddie Gil

By Blanche S. Rivera

ACTION star Fernando Poe Jr. and evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva don't have a monopoly on disqualification suits. This time, the object of exclusion from the presidential race is businessman Eddie Gil.

Former Press Undersecretary Honesto Isleta, a supporter of Villanueva's, asked the Commission on Elections on Saturday to disqualify Gil, one of the five candidates endorsed by the Commission on Elections legal department, from the presidential derby.

In a seven-page petition, Isleta said Gil lacks the political machinery to carry out a nationwide campaign and his name would only cause confusion since he and Villanueva are both using "Eddie" in their campaign.

Isleta, who served in the administration of President Fidel Ramos, is also a retired general. He recently resigned from the office of Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo after declaring his support for Villanueva.

"His candidacy is putting the electoral process in disrepute. He is making a mockery of the elections," Isleta's lawyer Jordan Pizarras said of Gil in a phone interview yesterday.

Citing certificates of canvass in the 2001 elections, Pizarras noted that Gil received only 456 votes when he ran for senator as compared to the 16 million votes garnered by the top senatorial candidate.

The legal department of the Comelec had endorsed Gil's presidential candidacy to the Comelec en banc, along with the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo, actor Fernando Poe Jr., former Sen. Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

The Comelec legal office, however, left out Villanueva, triggering suspicions that Malacañang may have had a hand in the Comelec's move. Villanueva was formerly a staunch supporter of Ms Macapagal.

"The Comelec legal department should take notice that Bro. Eddie's party is nationwide in scope," Pizarras said, adding that he was "very confident" that the Bangon Pilipinas National Renewal Movement would be accredited as a political party.

Lakas members prefer Roco over Gloria

By Carlito Pablo

A PARALLEL group of political leaders belonging to the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats has been set up, but not to support the reelection bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is party chair.

This group led by former Ifugao Rep. Gualberto Lumauig is supporting former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

Lumauig noted that the group members, representing areas from Luzon to Mindanao, were former congressmen who had decided not to run in the May 10 polls. "We will concentrate on the election of Roco," he said.

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De Venecia noted that Congress would again go on recess on Feb. 6. *Carlito Pablo*

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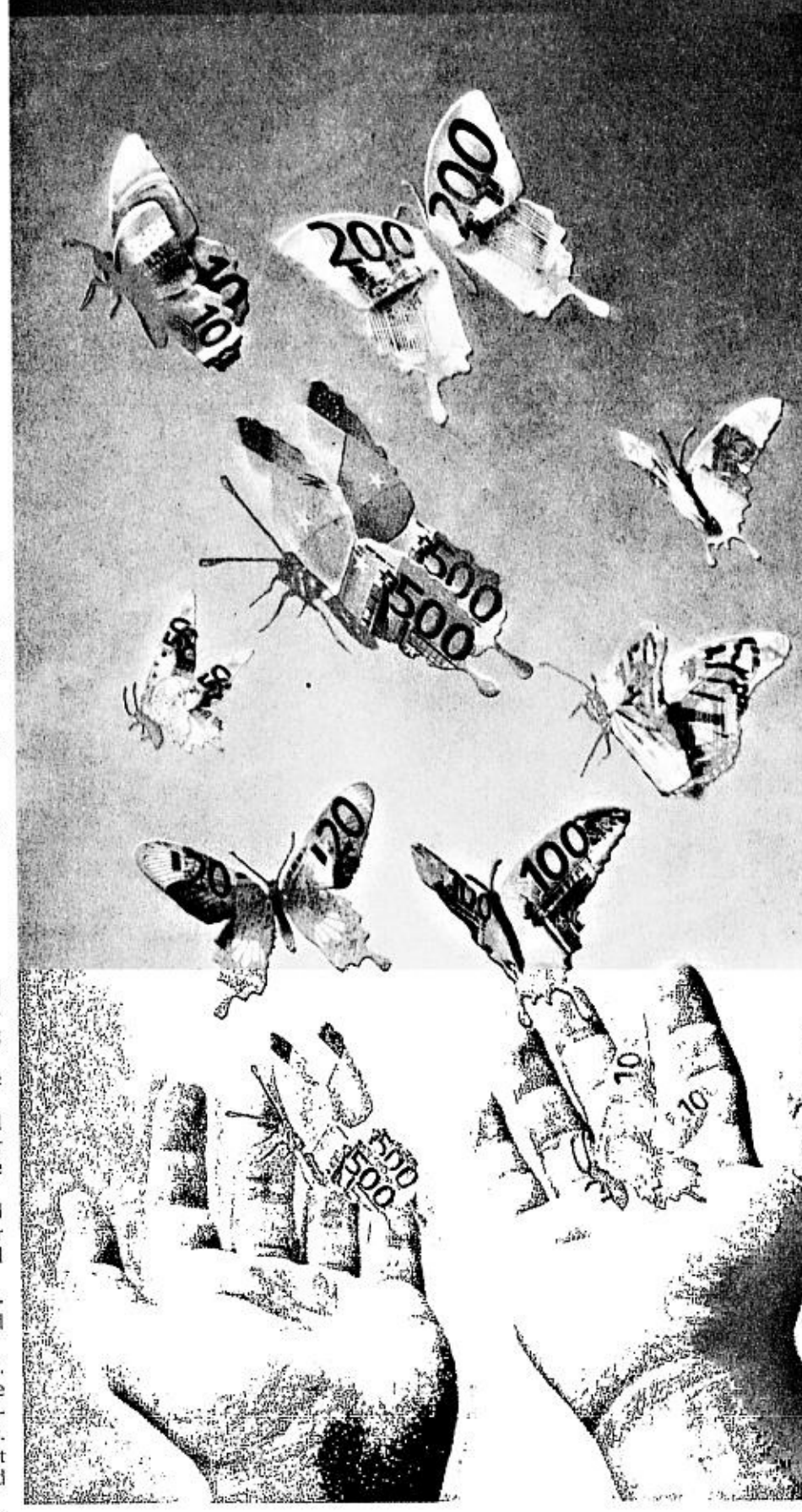

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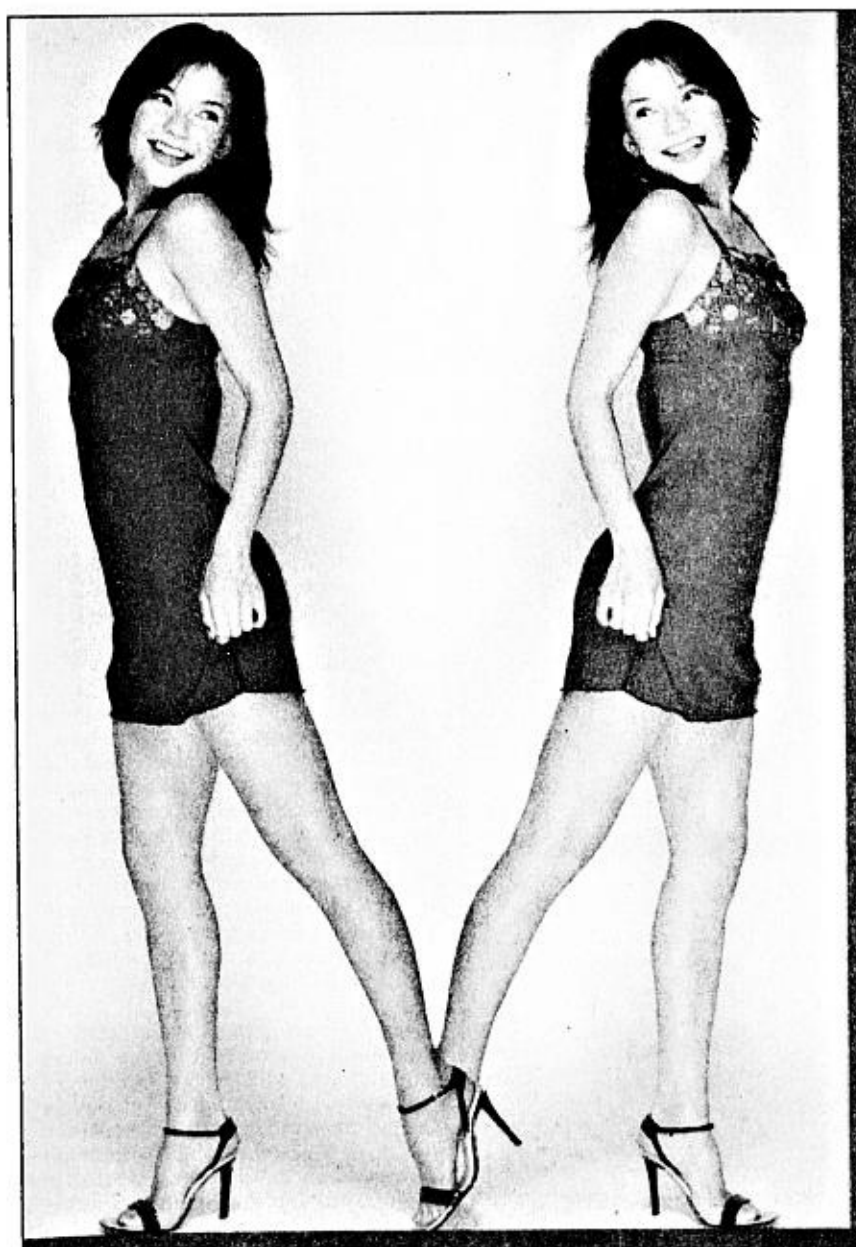

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Lakas members prefer Roco over Gloria

By Carlito Pablo

A PARALLEL group of political leaders belonging to the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats has been set up, but not to support the reelection bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is party chair.

This group led by former Ifugao Rep. Gualberto Lumauig is supporting former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

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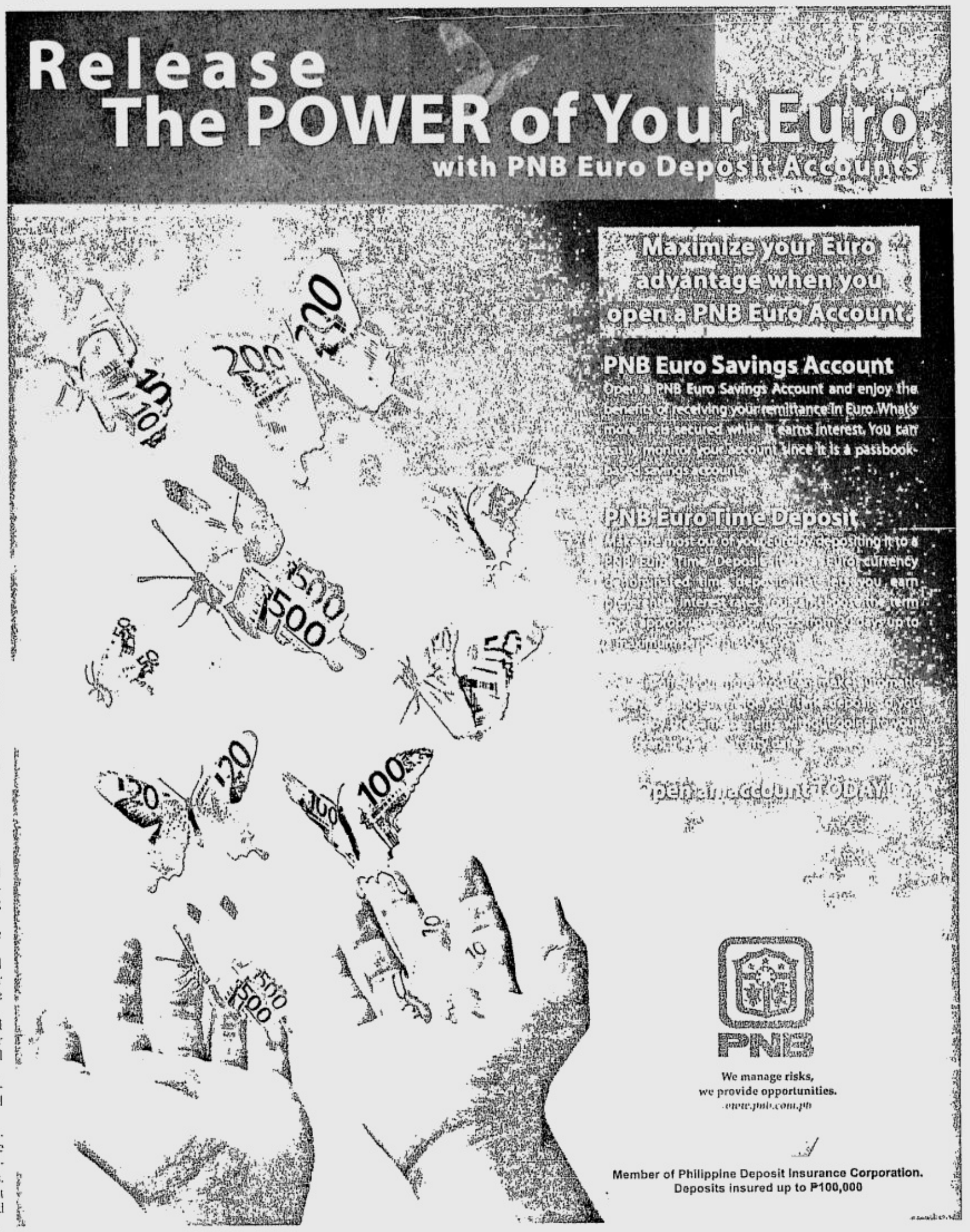

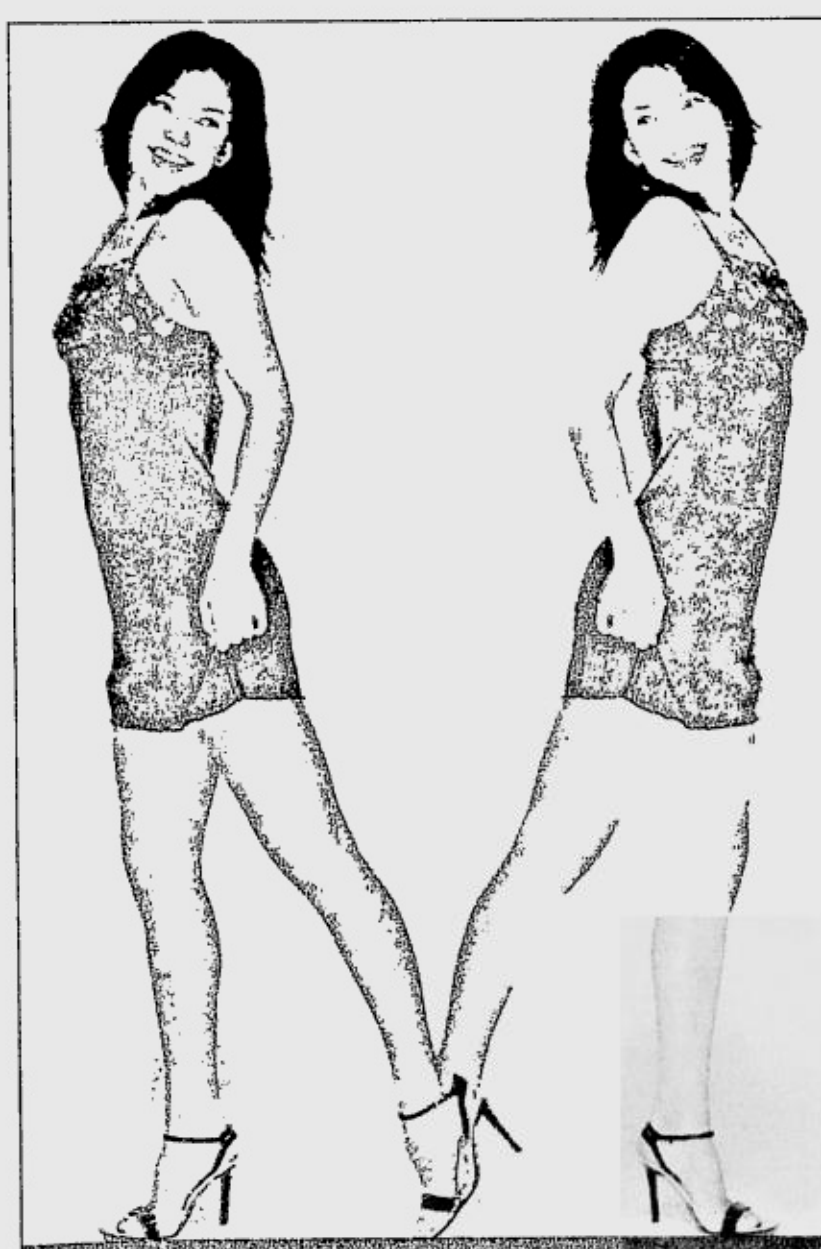

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Senators say delay in polls 'explosive'

From page A1

"Charges may be raised over violations of the Constitution which will cause chaos that could destabilize the government," he said. He expressed fears a constitutional crisis might lead to the possible reimposition of martial law or even a takeover by the Armed Forces.

Pangilinan urged the Commission on Elections "to do all it can to address all matters addressed to the elections including readiness to go to manual (vote-counting)."

"If the Comelec has to work 18 hours a day and seven days a week beginning today until election day to ensure that all systems are in place . . . then so be it," Pangilinan said, warning that the country's "constitutional democracy [was] at risk."

Another KNP candidate for senator, former Ambassador to the United States Ernesto Maceda, said he was not surprised that Drilon supported a postponement.

A delay, he said, would favor President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has been lagging in the surveys.

In a text message, Maceda said his group was "unconditionally against" any postponement of the elections because the Comelec has enough time to revert to the manual system.

"Any postponement is unconstitutional," Maceda said. "Let us avoid any possibility of unrest by holding elections as scheduled."

But Malacañang yesterday said it wanted the original schedule to be followed.

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, told RMN radio that the President wanted the May 10 elections to push through as provided by law because "we have long been preparing for it."

"The sooner we get over this electoral exercise, the better for all of us. If the elections are held [as scheduled], especially if they are clean, peaceful and credible, we will have long-term stability for the government," Bunye said.

But he also noted that the Comelec was empowered by the Constitution to lay down the rules in holding elections, including their temporary suspension. "That is within their jurisdiction and it is granted to them by the Constitution," he said.

Not constitutional

In Congress, a lawyer-representative warned that any move to postpone the national elections would be constitutionally infirm.

Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) raised this point amid reports that the Supreme Court was set to invalidate a contract awarded by the Comelec for poll automation.

"National elective officials, from the president to senators, have a constitutionally mandated fixed term of office so it would be unconstitutional to postpone the national election for any reason," Nograles said.

"If [the contract is] voided, they [Comelec] can only postpone local elections," he said. "They [the national elections] must go on the second Monday of May as provided."

Nograles noted that local officials "can continue holding office in (a) holdover capacity in case an election is postponed."

They can then "wait for the Comelec to reset the election for all local elective posts.'"

But Nograles said that this cannot be allowed for national officials

"National elective posts like the president, vice president and Congress cannot hold office after their fixed terms," the lawmaker said.

No worries

In Baguio City, former Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon said the automated counting of votes should not worry candidates running in the May 10 elections because it would help speed up the election process.

Gordon, a senatorial candidate of the administration party, also said fears from the opposition that they would be cheated through the automated polls were "unfair" statements.

"In anything that is new, people will always oppose it . . . All the time we have elections, (people will always say) *'Ang tagal-tagal naman niyan, ano ba 'yan* (What does it take so long?) Why can't we automate?' Now that we are automating they don't want it," he said.

"When you say something because you're afraid, you're laying the predicate that you will be cheated. That's unfair, that's not right," he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Gordon said having the automated counting system in place was a "win-win" situation for both administration and opposition candidates because of the increased speed in the release of election results.

He defended the full computerization of elections, saying automated counting should have been done a long time ago.

Gordon said automated counting would also benefit teachers who serve during elections because their tasks would be lessened. *With reports from Carlito Pablo; Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; and Norman Bordadora*

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, January 12, 2004
1st Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: 1S 1:1-8
Gospel: Mk 1:14-20

After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee and began preaching the Good News of God. He said, "The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand. Change your ways and believe the Good News."

As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." At once, they abandoned their nets and followed him. Jesus went a little farther on and saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee; they were in their boat mending their nets. Immediately, Jesus called them and they followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.

Commentary

The gospels are not big books, nor even small books; they would be better described as booklets. Mark's is the shortest, about 25 pages. That means that all the content is compressed. Mark's style is above all rapid: he often uses words like "immediately" and "straight away." When he says in today's reading, "Jesus saw Simon and his brother and said to them, 'Follow me,' and at once they left their nets and followed him," this owes much to Mark's style of writing. Likewise when "he saw James and John and immediately called them and they followed," this is more quickly said than done.

But we have plenty of time, we can dwell on it and let it expand to a long conversation. We see everything with hindsight: we see things that were not seen then. We see the utterly compelling presence of the Son of God, crucified and risen. They saw a man from the backwater town of Nazareth. Whatever attracted them at the first meeting, it was his lengthy conversations, the freshness of his thinking, his compassion, that held them.

When we are confused and distressed we can take time to sit down by the lake (any lake—or indeed anywhere) and enter into deep conversation with him, listening to his deep mind and great heart.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Testimony of rape victims—The accused fails to persuade us. In rape offenses, the lone testimony of the complainant, if credible, straightforward, convincing and otherwise consistent with human nature and the ordinary course of things, may stand to convict the accused. The credibility of the complainant's testimony is of utmost significance. In this case the trial court gave credence and full probative weight to the testimony of the victim. We have consistently held that this court will not disturb the findings of the trial court as to the credibility of witnesses. The trial court can best evaluate the credibility of witnesses and their testimonies because of its opportunity to observe the witnesses and their demeanor, conduct and attitude especially under cross-examination. Its assessment is respected unless certain facts of substance and value were overlooked which, if considered, might affect the result of the case. There is nothing on record that would impel the court to deviate from the findings and conclusion of the trial court. The victim testified in a categorical, straightforward and consistent manner. As observed by the trial court, she tearfully narrated the details of the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of accused-appellant and the circumstances leading and subsequent thereto. She unwaveringly and positively identified the accused-appellant as her defiler without any purpose other than to seek justice for the crime committed against her. Accused-appellant failed to impute any motive against complainant that would tarnish her credibility at the witness stand. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Bellosillo, Second Division, People vs Basite, G. R. No. 150382, October 2, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

Police shoot up wrong car, tag car theft victim

A MAN who lost his car may be just as liable as the four policemen who shot at and nearly killed two women who were in a car mistaken for the stolen vehicle, a senior police official said yesterday.

The four officers now in hot water would not have mistaken the women's Honda Civic for the carnapped vehicle had not Erickson Legaspi personally told police that his car, a silver-gold Civic, had been spotted along Gen. Aguinaldo Highway in Barangay Silang Crossing East in Tagaytay City, according to Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite provincial director.

"They [policemen] apparently considered the information very reliable because it had come straight from the victim," Rosales told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

But Rosales admitted that SPO1 Reo Ambion, SPO1 Bartolome De Villa Jr., PO3 Edgardo Amon and PO1 Jose Bautista may have violated police rules of engagement when they fired directly at the women's sedan.

Victims Lovelyn Velecatia, 46, and Victoria Tan, 50, suffered only superficial wounds on their arms despite the 32 bullets that peppered their car.

In a report, Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla, Calabarzon police regional director, said that after Legaspi told police where his car could be found, Ambion's team set up a roadblock at Mendez Crossing in Tagaytay.

After stopping the women's car, Ambion and the other policemen claimed they opened fire when they heard an explosion just as they were about to check the Civic's occupants.

But it turned out they had stopped the wrong vehicle since Legaspi's Civic had license plate number WEY-645 while the women's was WEY-465.

Rosales said the officers probably also failed to realize that Velecatia and Tan's car was dark green because the area was dark where they were stopped at around 8:30 p.m. on Dec. 28.

He said the four officers were placed under technical arrest right after the incident. They are facing administrative charges for alleged violation of police engagement protocols but the two women have yet to file a criminal case against them. *Christian V. Esguerra*

Marcos heirs continue to buck high court ruling

THE MARCOSES continue to block the Supreme Court's order forfeiting their $683 million in Swiss bank deposits in favor of the government.

According to the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the heirs of the late statesman Ferdinand Marcos have tried "all kinds" of maneuvers here and abroad to derail the high court's final and executory ruling dated Nov. 18.

In an urgent motion before the high court on Jan. 7, the PCGG said the family would "certainly continue" their attempts "until and unless the decision ... is executed."

The commission urged the high court to immediately implement the ruling by remanding the records of the case to the Sandiganbayan, before which the Marcoses are facing graft charges.

Only then, if not through a direct order from the SC, could the Sandigan issue a writ of execution that would transfer the funds to the national treasury, the PCGG said.

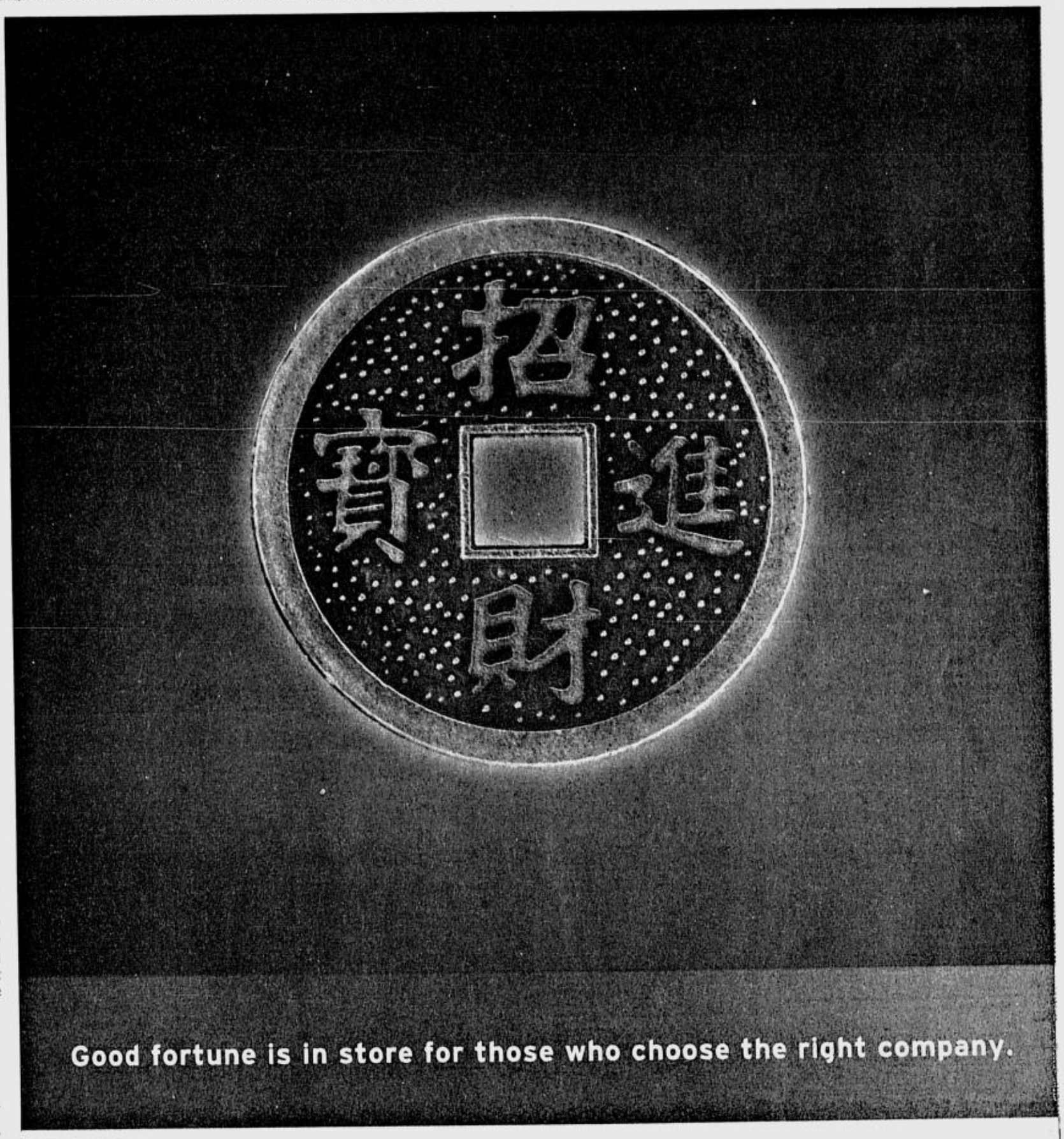
The commission said the high court had to act right away, given the Marcoses' persistent efforts—mostly in Switzerland, the United States and Singapore—to undermine the decision, filing "all kinds of petitions, letters and motions."

Clearly, the PCGG pointed out, the Marcoses were ignoring court procedures.

The SC declared the $683 million ill-gotten and order its forfeiture it last July 15. The decision became final on Nov. 18 after the court rejected a motion for reconsideration (MR) filed by former first lady Imelda Marcos.

On Dec. 19, despite the court's prohibition, the Marcos widow filed a second MR.

"They're trying to prevent execution (because) obviously they can't reverse the decision anymore," PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said in an interview. *Dona Pazzibugan*



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Court stays arrest of ex-Pasar exec

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PASIG City Regional Trial Court has recalled the arrest warrant it issued earlier against Javier Herrero, former president of the Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. (Pasar), after Herrero's counsel filed a motion for reconsideration.

Lawyer Ricardo Ongkiko, representing Herrero, said there was not enough basis for the complaint filed against his client.

An arrest warrant was issued against Herrero on Dec. 18 following a complaint filed by three Pasar minority stockholders who accused him and Pasar's corporate secretary Jocelyn Sanchez-Salazar of concealing company documents.

The shareholders believed the documents would have clarified alleged irregularities in the handling of the company's finances.

Lawyer German Q. Lichauco II, who represents the minority shareholders, said the accused violated a provision of the Corporation Code, which requires companies to make available to all its shareholders records of company transactions and its financial condition.

500 shares

The minority stockholders alleged that the accused refused to furnish them copies of certain company records, which they said would have shed light on "irregularities" that benefited Pasar's majority shareholder Glencore.

The minority stockholders who filed the complaint against Herrero and Salazar were Consuelo Padilla, Manuel Agcaoili and Pablito Lim. Each of the complainants has 500 shares in Pasar.

Pasar is the country's largest producer of raw materials for copper products, such as cathodes used in fiber optics and wiring harness. It is 90-percent owned by Glencore AG of Switzerland.

In response to the accusations, Ongkiko said the management of Pasar had not actually denied the minority shareholders' request for company records.

Confidential

He said Pasar gave them copies of minutes of meetings, financial statements and income tax returns, which the accusers had asked for.

He said Pasar did not give the complainants copies of other corporate documents that are considered confidential because the disclosure of the information may adversely affect Pasar's business.

These company records include payroll, accounts payables and receivables, capital expenditure, hedging reports and procurement contracts.

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Tourism failure explained

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Former Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon on Saturday blamed the country's "public image and political conflicts" for the failure of his high-profile campaign "WOW! Philippines" to bring in the targeted number of foreign visitors last year.

Gordon, who resigned from the Cabinet recently to run for senator under the administration ticket, lectured Philippine Military Academy cadets on the "real" impact of military adventurism after telling them about the mediocre tourist turnout.

The PMA earlier honored Gordon with a parade and review.

More than SARS

Noting that the failed Oakwood mutiny in July last year hurt the tourism industry more than the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) scare a few months earlier, the ex-tourism chief asked the cadets not to read too much into a constitutional provision that defines the soldier as the "protector of the people and the state."

Gordon said 2003 ended with a three-day shortfall of the target of 2.2 million tourists. Without the Oakwood incident and SARS, he stressed, the country could have drawn as many as 10 million, especially since the World Tourism Organization had designated last year as "Visit Philippines 2003."

The tourism department also offered cash prizes to local governments that managed to fill their quotas in foreign tourist arrivals during the period.

But Gordon said the country's image and conflicts in its institutions, including the Supreme Court and the military, had turned off foreigners. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Haven of rare manta rays found

From page A1

growth. One area has a big concentration of branching Acropora or Staghorn corals.

Paz, who belongs to the US-based Professional Association of Diving Instructors (Padi), said the discovery had again put Bicol on the world's diving map.

The manta ray (*Manta birostris*), is considered one of the five largest species of fish in the world, according to the website www.mantaray.com. It can grow up to eight meters wide and weigh up to over 400 kilos.

It feeds on plankton, small crustaceans and fish, but like other filter feeders, it has nonfunctional teeth and is no threat to larger sea creatures unless threatened.

Unlike other rays, the manta's tail has no spine. Its power wings serve as its only defense. A blow from a wing of a full-grown manta carries a powerful punch.

Usually found in temperate and tropical waters near islands, manta rays migrate around the world, going where plankton abounds.

Accidental

Paz said his group discovered the Tacdogan Reef accidentally, in February last year. The group was on a dive at Pilar port in Sorsogon when local residents asked it to dive in a reef in the middle of Ticao Pass between Sorsogon and Masbate, because big sharks had been sighted there.

"We didn't have any idea of the manta rays' presence in the area. We never heard anything about it from anyone. There may be other groups who saw it ahead of us. Maybe they also saw the hammerhead sharks. But they seemed to have taken it for granted and did not make a big thing out of it," Paz said.

"So I went back the following month, together with my group, which is especially working on this kind of concern. We brought with us the necessary gear and facilities and the first thing we did was to survey the area," Paz narrated.

He said that even the fishermen could not tell the group exactly where the site was. "But when we finally reached the place, our sounder suddenly rang out. In less than 10 minutes after dropping anchor, we saw the majestic giant creatures slowly approaching us," Paz recalled.

Shock

The mantas were almost four meters long, swimming gracefully against the strong current. "All of us were shocked at the sight of such large creatures. We tried to hold on to our lives by clinging like glue to the hard corals," Paz said.

They were scared at first, he said. "But really, they were friendly and gentle. And mind you, these manta rays are not the ordinary and small ones. They are like the giant Pacific mantas. The largest I actually saw was about five meters wide and really huge," Paz said.

"While swimming, we knew when one was approaching because the surroundings would get dark and covered by its shadow."

Paz said the first dive proved to be more than what his group had bargained for. It was quite an adventure, with the rough seas, howling northeast wind, cold water and ripping current estimated at three knots—the kind that can rip the mask off a diver's face, he said.

The biggest swarm of mantas they saw in one dive was 12. "And that was a big number because mantas are very rare. Besides, seldom would a diver see such kind of creatures in the country," Paz said. "So we marked it, and we already made a dive spot."

More sightings

More sightings came later. In their diving activities from February to September, the divers never got back home frustrated. "We always saw manta rays in each of our dive. And the sighting was not only once as we found up to four sightings all in all in that reef," Paz said.

The largest concentration of manta rays was observed in February-July.

Other species that the group spotted included hammerhead sharks and thresher sharks, with a very long tail and slender body.

When a group of Japanese came here last month, they saw six threshers, a good sign that Ticao is a healthy reef and rich in pelagics. The site could be one of the best sites in the world, Paz said.

His group, called the Adventure Bound, was able to bring in eco-tourists in the area, he said.

Asian divers and those from other places soon got wind of their discovery. Since then, Ticao Reef and Bulan town were never the same again. Almost every week from March to July, groups of enthusiastic scuba divers from Manila would book and visit the reef in search of the gentle giants.

They were never disappointed. They would see three to six manta rays in one dive.

Migratory

The biggest compliment that Paz got was when a group of Chinese came in August last year and told him, "You guys are sitting on a gold mine."

But Jaime de la Vega, regional director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, said he had not heard of the manta rays' presence in the Ticao Pass. But there had been previous sightings even in the waters of Donsol and Pilar towns in Sorsogon, he said.

"Actually, there's a migratory path our experts have traced in the last few years. Manta rays were spotted in Sorsogon going to Samar, then proceeding to Bohol even up to northern Mindanao," he said.

He said that when manta ray catching was banned, "we really imposed it through the local government units."

"However, when small fisherfolk made representations last year and expressed that catching such pelagic (fish inhabiting the upper layers of the open sea) did not actually make the species endangered, we just issued ID cards to qualified fisherfolk. But we lost feedback on our monitoring until last year," the BFAR official said.

Blast fishing, harpoon

Not all sightings, however, were delightful. In August last year, Paz's group saw a manta ray with its broad backside embedded with at least 20 fishermen's hook lines of different colors.

That whole month of August was marked with disappointment, helplessness and anger among the environmental conservationists led by Paz.

"The sad thing is that the last manta we saw was filled with fishermen's hooks in its body," he said.

In an earlier dive, he said he saw the first sign of illegal fishing practices: small fishes (mostly sardines and rainbow runners) with blasted stomachs scattered among the reef, dead from obvious dynamite fishing.

But the next was more sickening, according to dive masters Carlos Locsin and Rico Calleja.

"Our group, together with some Japanese divers, saw two fishing boats that had just harpooned two big mantas," they said. The mantas were about three meters long. "They sliced them and had three pieces each."

"Upon seeing the chopped mantas, one of our foreign guests cried. But the fishermen were very casual about it. Though they already killed the gentle giants, we approached the fisherfolk and told them that what they did was illegal," Locsin said.

But the fishermen told them: "There is no such thing as illegal when you are starving."

"We did not argue, anxious that the fisherfolk might get hostile and threaten our guests. We just took pictures to document how uninformed they were," Locsin said.

The last illegal act they witnessed was a case of dynamite fishing, while Paz was taking divers from ABS-CBN who were going to document the reef.

Appeal

Since then, numerous illegal practices have been witnessed and reported by the group. So, the group vowed to do something against manta harvesting, which is illegal.

The Bicol Scuba Divers Foundation Inc. (BSDFI) has passed a resolution urging Bulan and Ticao officials to act immediately to protect the reef but to no avail.

Paz stressed that nowhere in the region could one find a diving sight where manta rays were as common and guaranteed to be sighted.

The nearest sight where the gentle giants can be found is the manta reef of Yap in Micronesia. Even the Tubbataha Reef in the Sulu Sea, which boasts of the most diverse marine ecosystem in the whole of Asia, will not guarantee a manta ray sighting, according to Paz.

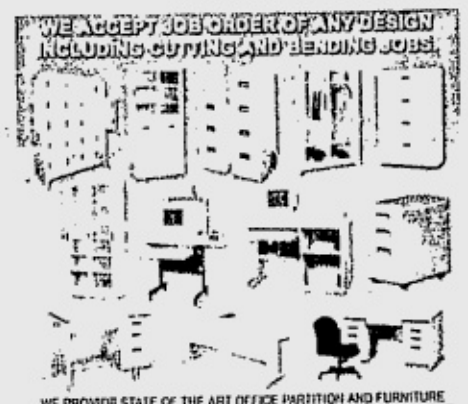
Bicol Tourism Director Maria Nini Ravanilla said: "Because of its strategic location being a pelagic enclave situated between Sorsogon and Masbate, this Manta Bowl will certainly boost ecotourism in the region."

Upon learning of the presence of manta rays in the Tacdogan Reef, Ravanilla said she herself would lead a team to inspect and validate the site. She said her group hoped to come up with another tourism package highlighting the manta ray bowl as the best eco-tourism destination in the area.

The Ticao Reef pioneers, the BSDFI and the Adventure Bound, strongly feel the need for a national campaign to save the manta rays of Ticao.

The team will conduct lobby work before local government units, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Tourism, and support agencies such as the Coast Guard, Philippine Navy and Philippine National Police.

"With such natural treasure right here in our shores, it is a pot of gold we are fighting for," Paz said.



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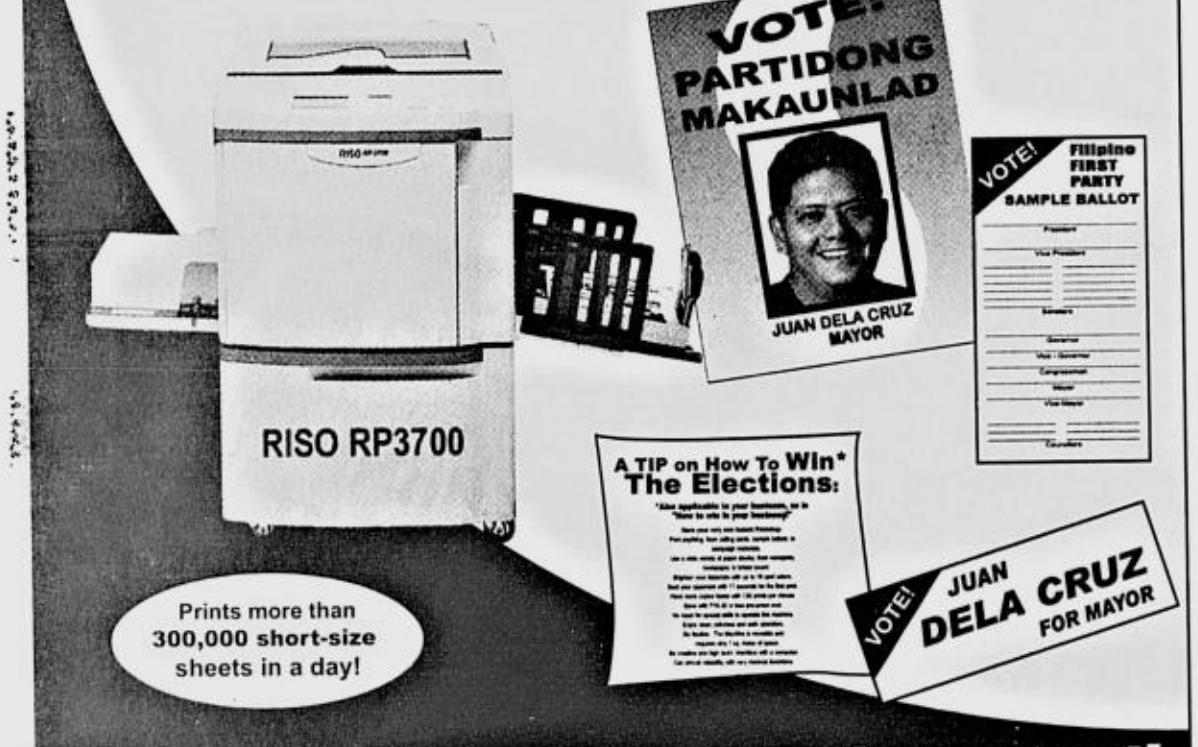

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Erap loses another bosom buddy

From page A1

Estrada is godfather to four of Asistio's children.

With his decision, Asistio walked the path taken by former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, whose "Juetengate" exposé led to Estrada's downfall in 2001, and by Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, who joined the administration party last year.

Even movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. purportedly had a falling out with Estrada owing to his initial decision not to include some of Estrada's men in his senatorial ticket for the May elections. Poe is the presidential candidate of the opposition's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Financial constraints

Reached for comment at Camp Capinpin, Estrada maintained: "I have not abandoned any friend of mine, but due to financial constraints I cannot help my friends in their reelection (bids)."

"I have not abandoned him (Boy) as a friend, but I cannot help everybody," he said.

Asked why he thought Asistio had to go public with their purportedly soured relations, Estrada could only surmise that "maybe because I cannot help him financially."

Asistio remains one of his friends, he stressed. "In fact, he visited me at least twice in detention. In fact, his brother Baby is still one of my best friends ... I talk with Baby more often," Estrada said.

Cold treatment?

But Estrada wondered aloud what "contracts" Asistio was talking about, denying insinuations that he awarded any deals to Asistio during his short-lived term.

Asistio said Estrada, a former

ASISTIO

mayor of San Juan, started to become "cold" to him when he assumed the presidency in 1998. Unlike during their days as local executives, he said he hardly saw Estrada anymore, except on some occasions when he was summoned to Malacañang.

But by Asistio's own admission, the falling-out was not exclusively emotional. He said he was "embarrassed" when Estrada broke a promise to appoint a judge he had recommended for a higher judicial post.

He said Estrada also owed him a huge amount of money. He did not elaborate.

The last straw, he said, was when Estrada never bothered to check if he had any plans for the coming May elections.

"Gloria [President Macapagal-Arroyo] is better because her people cared to ask about my political plans and even offered to help," he said in Filipino. "He (Estrada) left me suspended in mid-air."

Malonzo's wife

Having learned that Estrada had deserted him, Asistio's friends from Ms Macapagal's camp invited him to run for mayor under the administration ticket.

The invitation, Asistio said, meant a lot considering that outgoing Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, the man who unseated him in 1995, belonged to the administration party and was fielding his former common-law wife, Gigi Emnace, in the coming mayoral race.

"If I were asked to choose among the presidential candidates, I would pick Gloria," Asistio said. "Even if they say Gloria won't win, I'm for her."

He said he would not go to the extent of joining the K-4 administration coalition but would actively campaign for Ms Macapagal in Caloocan, the way he campaigned for Estrada in the 1998 elections.

Asistio said the administration was so dead serious on getting him that he had a series of meetings with Jose Rufino, Lakas-CMD executive director, Speaker Jose de Venecia and the President's chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao last year.

But he claimed he was soon informed that

he could not be included in the ticket after Malonzo purportedly personally lobbied that his wife be the administration's official mayoral candidate.

Lea sings to Robert ...

From page A1

sional began to the strains of Johann Pachelbel's "Canon in D," the cue for the entry of principal sponsors—Jose Mari Chan, Ferdinand Agustin, Remedios Casasola and Nancy Yu.

Among the seven bridesmaids were Christina Yasunaga, Chien's cousin who encouraged the romance that led to this wedding, and DJ Francisco, girlfriend of the bride's brother, Gerard.

Actor Victor Lirio, main wedding coordinator, and Yvette Fernandez Ferreol, Bloomberg Television producer, were the honor attendants.

Salonga, lovely in an elegant wedding gown by Cebuana designer Monique Lhuillier, marched to the altar with her brother and her mother, Ligaya.

She would tell the INQUIRER later what for her was the highlight of the ceremony: "Walking down the aisle and seeing him!"

Her heart skipped a beat then, but Chien was already in tears.

Before the couple proceeded to the main altar, they exchanged hugs and kisses with Gerard and Ligaya, who also started to cry. It was one of the evening's emotional peaks.

But nothing matched the tearful exchange of "I do's" before the officiant, Fr. Brian Castañeda. Weeping and barely able to speak, Chien could only whisper his vows: "I, Robert, take you, Lea, to be my wife ..."

Salonga upped the heart-tugging impact of the moment when she managed to sing "Two Words" to her sobbing and shaking groom. The song was an early wedding present from Louie Ocampo and Freddie Santos. By this time, everyone in the cathedral was misty-eyed or openly sniffling. Then the bride recited her wedding vows and yielded to tears as well.

Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's "One Hand, One Heart," sung by Lea's cantor, Sabrina Lu, and now US-based singer Bobby Martino during the presentation of the gifts, reflected the bride's musical theater background.

Communion hymns were Ocampo and George Canseco's "Ikaw," sung by Liz Casasola, and "Tanging Yaman" by Fr. Manoling Francisco (who was present) and Philip Gan, performed by Luzviminda Lor.

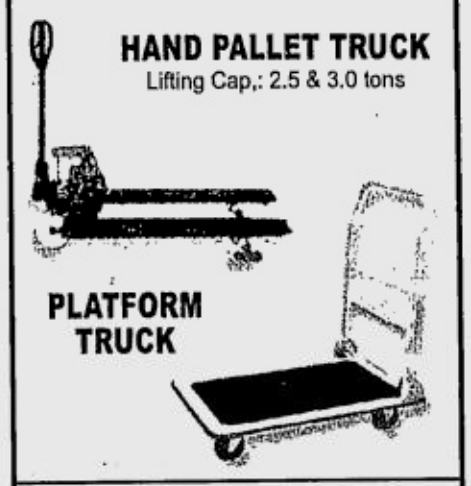
The newlyweds exchanged a long kiss to thunderous applause before the recessional, for which Jean Joseph Mouret's "Rondeau" was played.

There were less tears but just as much emotion at the reception in downtown Los Angeles' historic and regal Millennium Biltmore Hotel.

High points of the party were Salonga and Chien—who was more composed now—singing D. Shire and C. Connors' "With You I'm Born Again," and then dancing with their parents to Louis Armstrong's classic "It's a Wonderful World."

Ligaya Salonga told the INQUIRER: "I'm very happy. She found a good partner—or else there wouldn't have been a wedding."

The church rites and reception were taped for a two-hour TV special directed by Bobby Garcia and hosted by Boy Abunda, to be shown in the Philippines later this month.



NOTICE OF 36-HR WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION IN PARTS OF MANILA AND PASAY

Maynilad Water Services Inc. has scheduled a 36-hour water service interruption in parts of Manila and Pasay Cities from 10 p.m., Friday, January 16 to 10 a.m., Sunday, January 18, 2004.

The water service interruption will pave the way for the insertion of two 600mm butterfly valves into the existing 750mm mainline at A. Francisco St., at the parking lot of the Pabahay sa Riles, HSG Compound, South Luzon Expressway, Manila. The project is meant to improve the water supply in the area.

The following areas and establishments will have no water during the service interruption:

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Century Park Hotel, Harrison Plaza, Rizal Coliseum, CCP Complex, GSIS/Senate Building, Central Bank Complex, De La Salle University, and St. Scholastica College.

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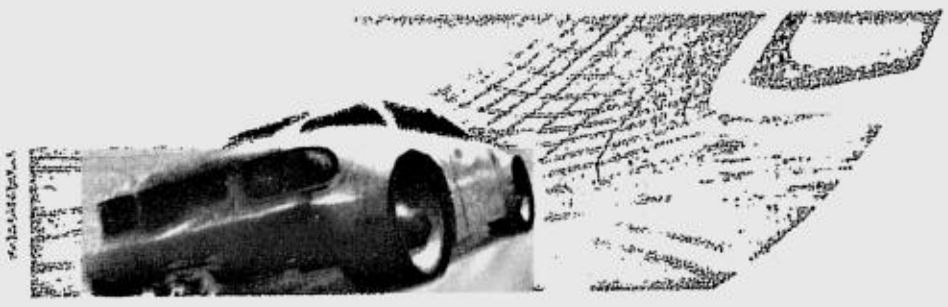

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2004

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

'Bush planned war on Iraq before 9/11'

Ex-insider says Bush bent on invasion from the start

NEW YORK—Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill charges in a new book that President George W. Bush entered office in January 2001 intent on invading Iraq and was in search of a way to go about it.

O'Neill, who was fired in December 2002 as part of a shake-up of Bush's economic team, has become the first major Bush administration insider to launch an attack on the president.

He likened Bush at Cabinet meetings to "a blind man in a room full of deaf people," according to excerpts from a CBS interview to promote a book by former Wall Street Journal reporter Ron Suskind, "The Price of Loyalty."

To go to war, Bush used the argument that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and had to be stopped in the post-Sept. 11, 2001, world. The weapons have never been found.

"From the very beginning, there was a conviction that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go," O'Neill said in the "60 Minutes" interview scheduled to air on Sunday. "For me, the notion of pre-emption, that the US has the unilateral right to do whatever we decide to do, is a really huge leap."

CBS released excerpts from the interview on Friday and Saturday.

The former treasury secretary and other White House insiders gave Suskind documents that in the first three months of 2001 revealed the Bush administration was examining military options for removing Saddam Hussein, CBS said.

"There are memos," Suskind told CBS. "One of them marked 'secret' says 'Plan for Post-Saddam Iraq.'"

Another Pentagon document titled "Foreign suitors for Iraqi Oil Field Contracts" talks about contractors from 40 countries and which ones have interest in Iraq, Suskind said.

O'Neill was also quoted in the book as saying the president was determined to find a reason to go to war and he was surprised that nobody on the National Security Council questioned why Iraq should be invaded.

"It was all about finding a way to do it. That was the tone of it," said O'Neill. "The president saying 'Go find me a way to do this.'"

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan rejected O'Neill's remarks.

"We appreciate his service. While we're not in the business of doing book reviews, it appears that the world according to Mr. O'Neill is more about trying to justify his own opinions than looking at the reality of the results we are achieving on behalf of the American people," McClellan said Saturday.

Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean accused Bush of using questionable pretenses to justify war with Iraq.

"The country deserves to know—and the president needs to answer—why the American people were presented with misleading or manufactured intelligence as to why going to war with Iraq was necessary. Secretary O'Neill's comments only underscore the continuing importance that these outstanding questions be answered," Dean said in a statement.

O'Neill also said the president did not ask him a single question during their first one-on-one meeting, which lasted an hour. The president's lack of engagement left his advisers with "little more than hunches about what the president might think," O'Neil told "60 Minutes."

Suskind's book, whose full title is "The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill," uses interviews with O'Neill, dozens of White House insiders and 19,000 documents provided by O'Neill.

O'Neill, who was fired due to disagreements over tax cuts, spent a difficult two years in Washington, joining the Bush administration with a background as a no-nonsense corporate executive. *Reuters*

UK troops kill 5 Iraqis in street clash

BAGHDAD—British troops said they opened fire on grenade-throwing Iraqi protesters in a clash in which at least five people were killed on Saturday, while Danish forces reported finding possible chemical weapons in southern Iraq.

The violence began when Iraqi police believed they were the target of gunfire during a protest over unemployment in the southeastern city of Amara, Britain's Defense Ministry said in a statement in London.

The police opened fire and British troops with armored vehicles were deployed to support them, the ministry said.

The British troops also opened fire when grenades were hurled at them, it said.

"It is our understanding that there have been six casualties—five fatalities and one injured," said the ministry. It said it could give few details on the deaths, but no British or Iraqi police casualties were reported.

Iraqi police said earlier they opened fire after the protesters began throwing stones at the provincial government's headquarters.

A number of protests over lack of jobs have been staged in Iraq since Saddam Hussein was toppled by US-led forces last April and some have turned violent.

Denmark said its troops had found 36 mortar shells buried in southern Iraq that initial chemical weapons tests showed could contain blister gas. The shells had been buried for at least 10 years and the site may contain another 100, it said.

"All the instruments showed indications of the same type of chemical compound, namely blister gas," the Danish Army Operational Command said on its website, cautioning further tests were needed. Final results were likely in about two days.

Blister gas, an illegal weapon which Saddam said he had destroyed, was used extensively against the Iranians during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Icelandic bomb experts working with the Danes said the 120mm shells were concealed in road construction some 75 km south of Amara and close to the Iranian border.

US President George W. Bush ordered US-led forces to invade Iraq after accusing Saddam of possessing weapons of mass destruction. No such arms have been found so far.

Former US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, fired in December 2002 as part of a shake-up of Bush's economic team, said in a new book "The Price of Loyalty" the president entered office in January 2001 intent on invading Iraq. *Reuters*

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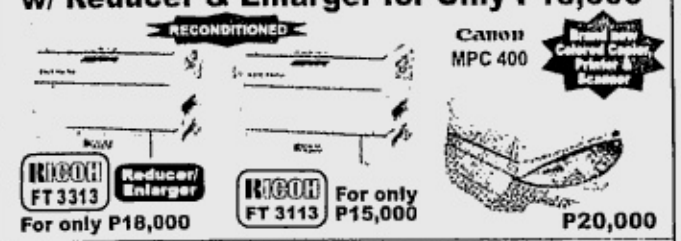

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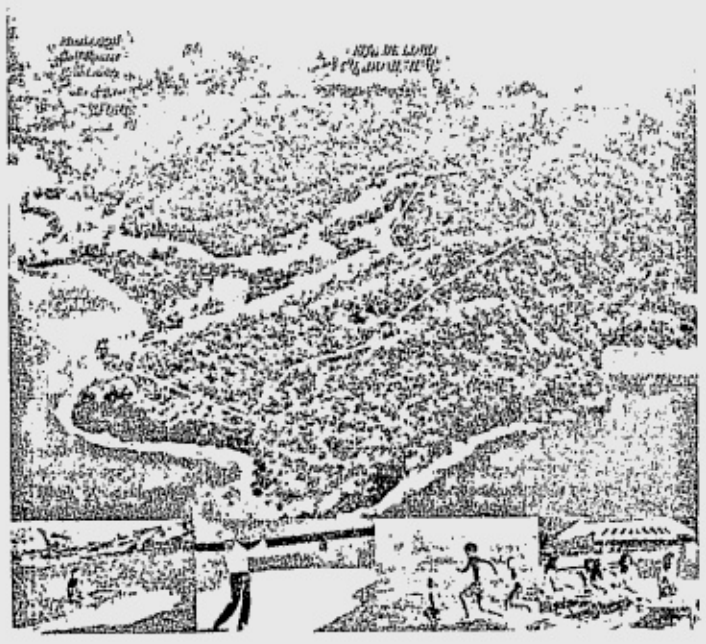

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Dr. Ricardo O. Fernandez finished his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Sto. Tomas. He is a consultant at the Makati Medical Center and Associate Board Examiner of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology.

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A YOUNG Palestinian throws stones at an Israeli tank in the Balata Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank town of Nablus Jan. 10. AFP

Palestinians insist on right to declare state unilaterally

RAMALLAH, West Bank—A top Palestinian decision-making body voiced its right on Saturday to declare a state unilaterally in the West Bank and Gaza after Israel threatened to take stand-alone measures of its own.

The executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) also named Arab East Jerusalem, seized by Israel in 1967 and annexed in a move rejected internationally, as the capital of a Palestinian state.

"The Palestinian leadership, in line with international legitimacy and signed agreements ... has the right to declare an independent democratic Palestine on all the territories that were occupied (by Israel) since 1967," said a statement released after a Friday meeting.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has warned he would pursue unilateral steps to quit parts of the West Bank should a US-backed "road map" to peace collapse, leaving Palestinians with less territory than they would get through negotiations.

Responding to Sharon's threats, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie raised the possibility on Thursday of opting for one state with equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis.

Qurie's proposal and the PLO Executive Committee statement underscored Palestinian concerns over Sharon's unilateral plan.

Zalman Shoval, Sharon's foreign policy adviser, said on Saturday the declaration of a state without an accord "would be in clear violation not only of international law, but also of the road map, which the Palestinians have supposedly accepted."

"Any unilateral declaration of this sort would not be recognized by the international community and would also necessitate appropriate counter steps by Israel," he told Reuters.

PLO executive committee member Qais Abu Layla said that the Palestinian statement did not necessarily mean Palestinians would exercise their right to declare a state.

Negotiations Minister Saeb Erekat said Qurie's binational proposal was in response to Israeli activities that were "burying" the two-state possibility.

But he added: "We are committed to a two-state solution."

Erekat pointed to Israel's construction of a mass barrier that cuts into the West Bank, absorbing some Jewish settlements and swathes of land, and continued building in Jewish settlements.

Palestinians call the barrier a land grab and a ploy to evade the road map that calls for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza beside a secure Israel by 2005. *Reuters*

Doctors' group decries rebuff of top stories

NEW YORK—American news media provide too little coverage of the conflicts in Colombia, Chechnya, Burundi and Congo, and on the refugee crisis on the Chad-Sudan border, the medical aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres said in its sixth annual list of "underreported humanitarian stories."

The US branch of MSF, known as Doctors Without Borders, also cited a lack of media attention to the high death toll worldwide from malaria, the crises in North Korea and Somalia, the conflict in Ivory Coast and the limited access of poor people to anti-AIDS medicines.

Nicolas de Torrente, executive director of MSF-USA, told The Associated Press on Friday that the list focuses on US news coverage because American media underreport international events in general, except for security issues and the Middle East.

"I think there are economic aspects to" the limited American news coverage of many regions, he said. "The other part is the assumption, the preconception that people are not interested. I don't believe that to be true."

The MSF report, released this week, said brutality toward civilians, including aid workers, increased in 2003. It also cited the predicament of Arjan Erkel, head of MSF's Northern Caucasus mission, who has been held hostage since he was kidnapped in the Russian republic of Dagestan in August 2002.

"Such insecurity contributes to preventing journalists from providing wider coverage of some of the world's most dangerous regions," the report said.

On some stories, the humanitarian dimensions were overlooked, the aid group said. For example, US trade initiatives were widely reported, but the possibility that trade agreements would restrict poor people's access to lifesaving medications drew little attention. *AP*

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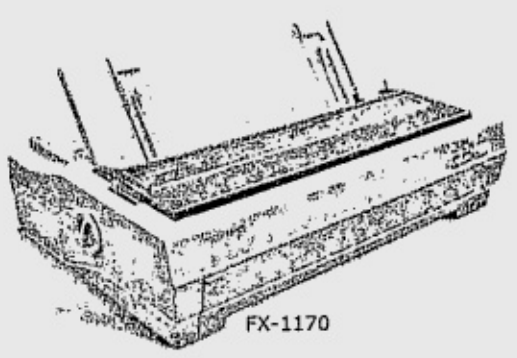

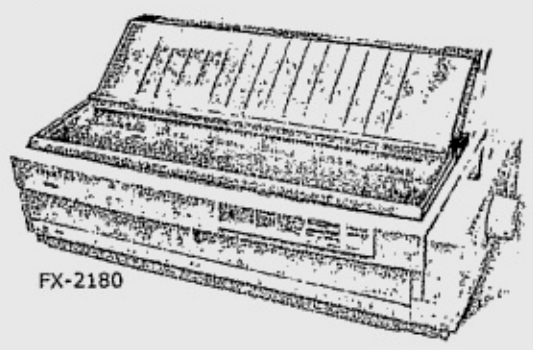

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Bush to seek new spacecraft for Nasa missions

CRAWFORD, Texas—President George W. Bush, in his big space policy announcement on Wednesday, will call for replacing aging US space shuttles with a new generation spacecraft to get Americans back to the moon and on to Mars, officials said on Saturday.

Seeking to give Nasa a new mission a year after the shuttle Columbia tragedy and to provide a space vision for his reelection campaign, Bush will set a goal of returning to the moon by the middle of the next decade and establishing a human presence there as a stepping stone to an eventual manned mission to Mars.

Bush will urge Congress to approve development of a new capsule-type spacecraft, called a crew exploration vehicle, capable of performing a variety of missions, including trips to the moon and the International Space Station, officials said.

It would be launched using conventional rockets much like the Apollo capsules of the 1960s and 1970s and would have an escape system that the shuttle does not have.

The new spacecraft would replace a planned orbital space plane that had been expected to follow the space shuttle.

The United States no longer has a rocket powerful enough to launch an Apollo-style moon mission. And although the Saturn 5 moon rocket was developed in just five years, it was dropped from production three years after Neil Armstrong's first moon landing in 1969.

To launch the new spacecraft, the United States may have to rely on giant Russian Soyuz or French Ariane rockets.

To pay for the costly new initiative, Bush would increase the Nasa budget by 5 percent a year and divert the $3.5 billion a year for space shuttle once it is retired in six or eight years on completion of the International Space Station.

"We're not going to drop everything we're doing. That has kind of gotten lost in all this noise about going to Mars. Nasa still has to get the shuttle going again and finish the space station," said John Logsdon, a George Washington University space expert.

Democratic presidential candidates are ridiculing Bush for talking of an ambitious space initiative when the budget deficit is expected to top $500 billion this fiscal year.

"I believe in big dreams and big goals and I am excited about the next phase of space exploration. But George Bush must be from another planet if he thinks that, with his fiscal priorities, we can get there and at the same time make America stronger," said Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. *Reuters*

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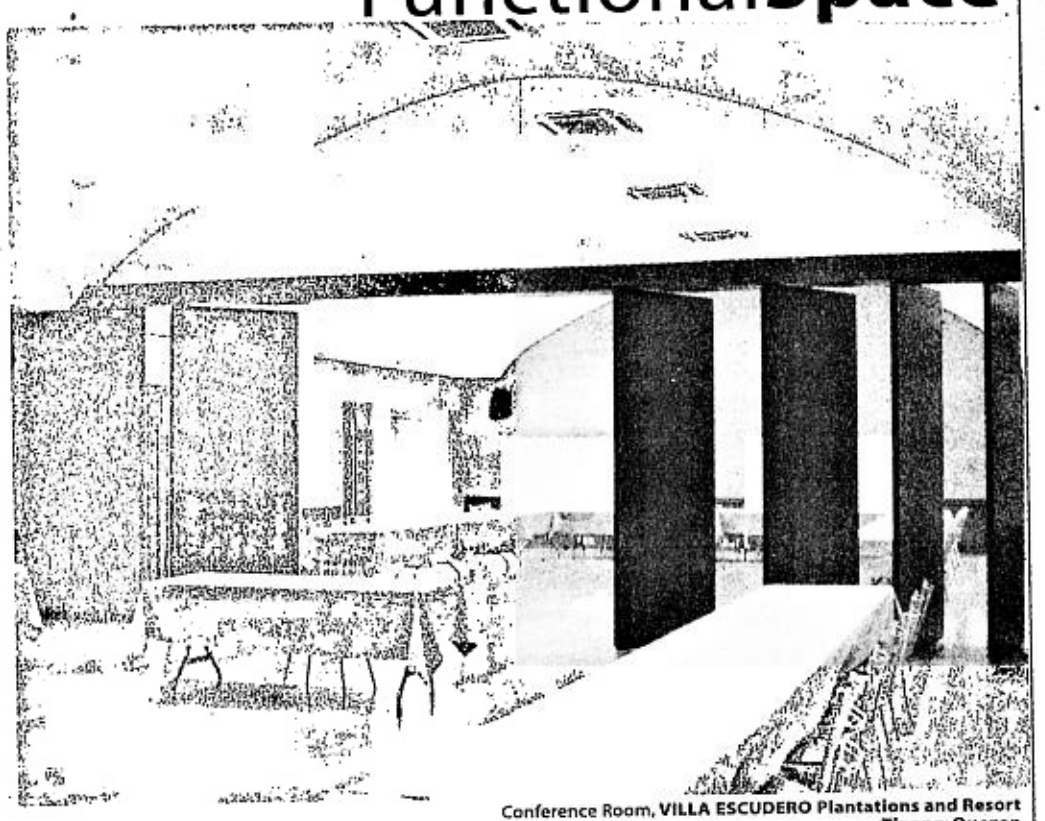

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Mars rover transforms into mobile explorer

PASADENA, Calif.,—The US robotic rover on Mars completed its transformation from folded landing craft to mobile explorer earlier than expected and may roll off its landing pad as early as Tuesday, scientists at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory said on Saturday.

The Spirit rover was set to begin a three-month search for signs of water on the Red Planet on Thursday—its 14th day on Mars—but the ease of the stand-up maneuver and a quick fix to a problem with the lander put the mission ahead of schedule.

On its seventh martian day, or sol seven, Spirit flawlessly executed one of the most complex space deployments ever to morph from its tetrahedron landing shape into a six-wheeled, golf cart-sized vehicle, scientists said.

The lander retracted a lift mechanism that raised Spirit to its full height, allowing the rover to push its front and rear wheels into place in the final steps of a "reverse robotic origami," said Chris Voorhees, mechanical systems engineer.

"She is asleep right now and resting comfortably on all sixes," he added.

The Nasa team spent time on Friday in the "test bed," a sort of Mars sandbox mocked up as the Spirit's landing site, trying to identify hazards in the rover's path.

The lander's front ramp is blocked by partially deployed airbags that scientists were unable to fully retract and test runs in the sand box showed the rover's right rear solar panel could snag on them, said mission manager Jennifer Trosper.

That led the Spirit team to settle on an alternative path down the back of the lander, which will require the rover to rotate from its south-facing position to face northwest.

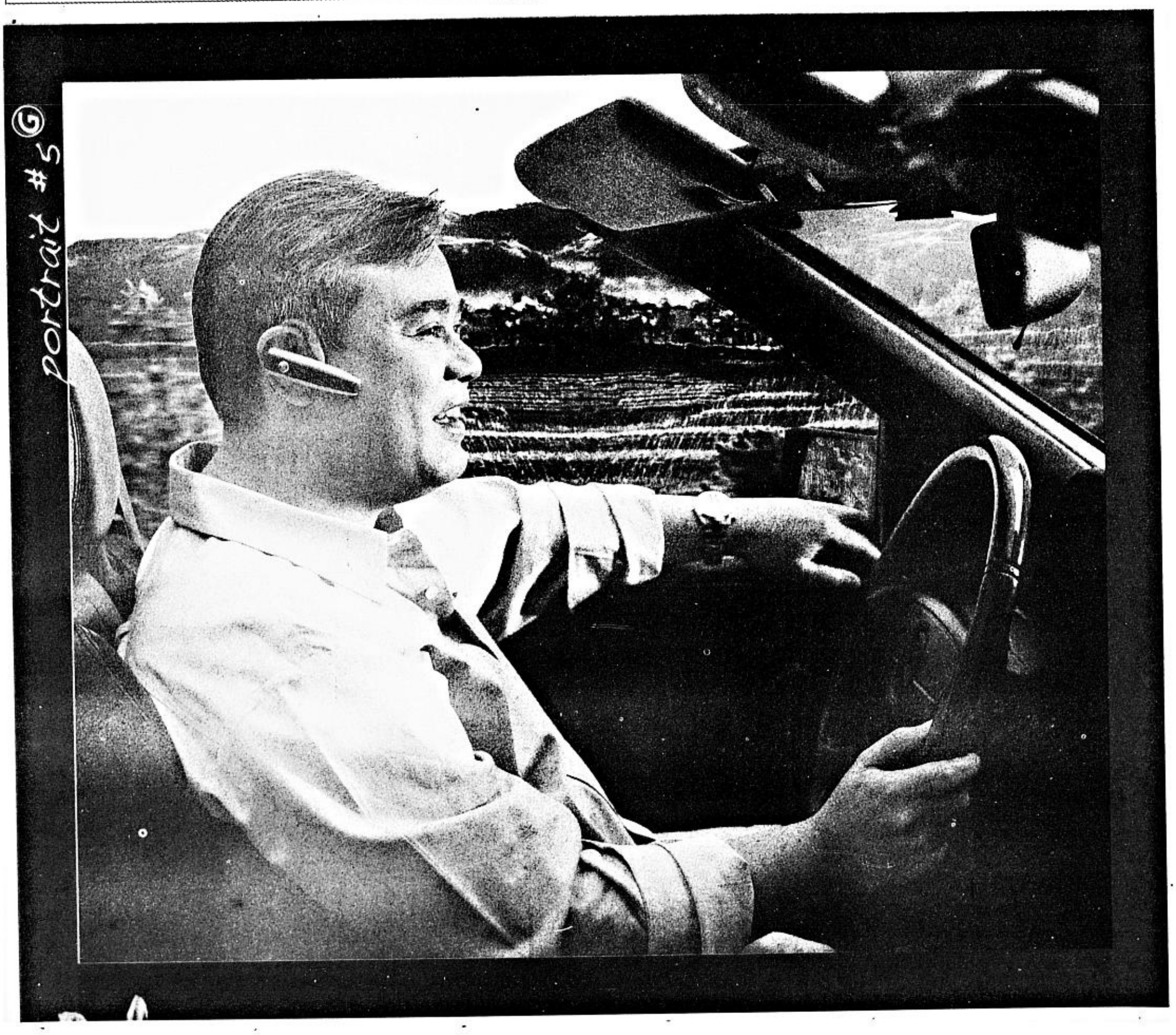
If all goes as planned, the rover will move into place atop the lander on Monday for a Tuesday night egress at around midnight, Trosper said.

The rover faces a 15-cm drop from the edge of the lander's ramp to the planet's surface. It will probably drive about a half-meter on its first day—just enough to get all six wheels onto the planet, she said.

In the intervening days, the team will cut the final cables holding Spirit to the lander and move a robotic arm laden with scientific instruments for the first time since it was lashed down for landing.

Scientists are thrilled with Spirit's ability to gather and transmit data of unprecedented detail and volume. The craft has surpassed the capabilities of the 1997 Pathfinder rover by tenfold, Trosper said.

Meanwhile, another team of scientists prepared for the Jan. 24 landing of Spirit's twin rover, Opportunity, which is heading toward a site on the opposite side of the planet. *Reuters*



N. Korea showed 'nuke deterrent' to US group

WASHINGTON—North Korean officials showed what they said was recently reprocessed plutonium, a potential ingredient for a nuclear weapon, to a visiting US delegation this week, The Washington Post said on Sunday, quoting a US official who heard initial details of the trip.

"One official said it appeared that the delegation had been shown what the North Koreans described as recently reprocessed plutonium," the daily said.

"North Korean officials told the experts the material has not been placed in a nuclear device and that it was prepared to 'freeze' it to resolve the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions," it said.

Pyongyang's official media said Saturday that North Korea showed its "nuclear deterrent force" to US scientists and congressional officials who visited the North's main nuclear complex at Yongbyon.

"As is known, the United States compelled us to make a nuclear deterrent force, which we displayed to (Lewis) and his group," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted a foreign ministry spokesperson as saying.

The North Korean report did not say exactly what the delegation was shown.

Delegation members questioned by reporters as they arrived in Beijing Saturday also kept mum, saying they wanted first to inform the US government about the trip.

Stanford University scholar John Lewis, head of the US delegation, confirmed that the group had visited Yongbyon, becoming the first outsiders to go there since UN inspectors were expelled a year ago.

Delegation member Siegfried Hecker, the former head of Los Alamos National Laboratory, plans to testify about the visit before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Jan. 20, the Post said.

US officials told the paper the visit was aimed at pressuring the US administration amid a bitter standoff over the North's nuclear program.

"We know exactly what the North Koreans are doing with these guys," a senior administration official told the daily. "It's the same old game."

North Korea offered last week to refrain from producing and testing nuclear weapons in what it said was a "bold concession" to the United States, an offer that US Secretary of State Colin Powell said had encouraged him.

But Pyongyang Friday vehemently rejected suggestions that it follow the example of Libya, which last month said it had renounced its quest for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and welcomed international inspections.

China, North Korea's main ally, has increased its efforts in the past year to persuade Pyongyang to halt its nuclear drive and announced Friday that it would send an envoy to Washington for talks on the standoff. *AFP*

Iran: No plan for talks with US

TEHRAN—Iran said on Saturday it had no plans to start talks with its longtime adversary, the United States, and that US policy toward the Islamic Republic must change.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Friday Iran's acceptance of US aid after the Bam earthquake had opened up opportunities for dialogue between the foes although there was no reason to expect a quick political rapprochement.

"Now there is no plan for starting negotiations," said Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi. "US policy toward Iran must change, getting rid of its hostile atmosphere."

"We have said that it is important for the negotiations between the countries to be based on mutual respect and to take place on an equal footing," he added.

In the aftermath of the Dec. 26 earthquake in the city of Bam that killed more than 30,000 people, the US relief effort was seen as prompting moves toward improved relations between Washington and Tehran.

Washington broke ties with Iran shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution when radical students stormed the US Embassy in Tehran and held 52 hostages for 444 days.

The United States has accused Iran of seeking nuclear weapons, of supporting anti-Israeli Islamic militants and of fomenting violence in Iraq. US President George W. Bush said it was part of an "axis of evil" along with North Korea and Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

Iranians widely term the United States "The Great Satan" and President Mohammad Khatami was quoted in the hardline Jomhuriye Eslami daily on Wednesday as saying it was an "enemy" and "unreliable."

Iran has called on Washington to lift sanctions imposed in 1995, which among other things prevent US companies from investing in Opec's second-largest producer or trading in Iranian oil. *Reuters*

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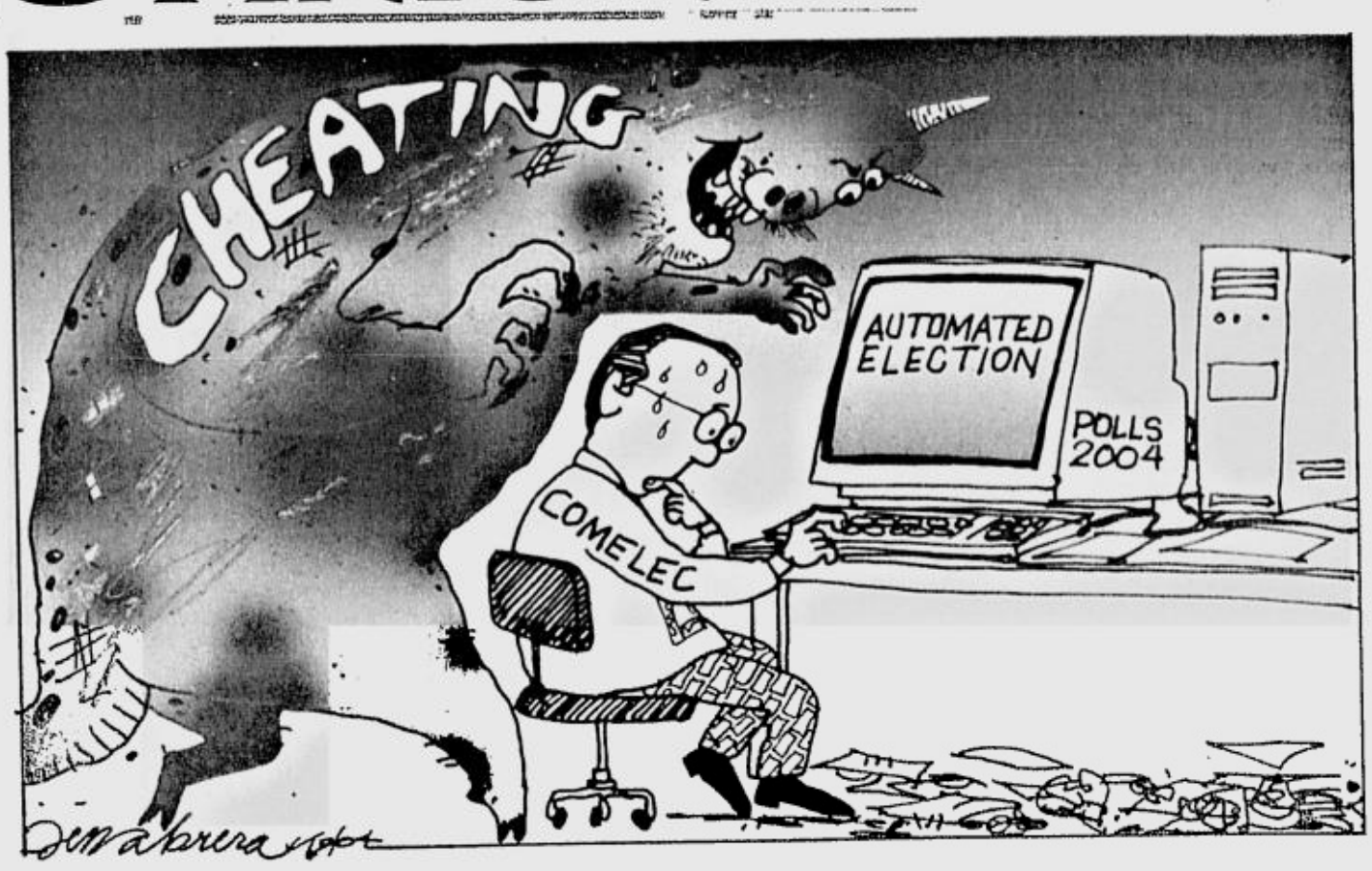

Funding the rebellion

EDITORIAL

LAST Friday, a congressman reported coming under attack by alleged New People's Army rebels.

Rep. Jose Solis of the second district of Sorsogon said 10 armed men disrupted the turnover ceremony of a road project in Gubat, Sorsogon, wounding two of his drivers and then pointing a gun at him. His crime: not paying permit-to-campaign fees to the communist insurgents.

The attack came a few days after NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal stepped up the insurgency's propaganda offensive. Taunting the inability of the government and PTC critics to stop the practice, which he called a "form of taxation by the revolutionary government," Rosal said the NPA had in fact increased its schedule of fees, because of inflation and the peso's depreciation. He also told journalists he invited inside a camp of the NPA's Leonardo Pacsi Command somewhere in the Cordilleras that representatives of the President's Lakas-CMD party were "among those already negotiating with the CPP" (the Communist Party of the Philippines).

Another rebel leader said Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay did the negotiating for the PTC fees on behalf of Lakas national and local candidates. (Pichay has denied the claim.)

Rosal also did not fail to mention that, in this election year, the CPP's armed wing "will intensify the armed struggle." This, he said, "will be its primary contribution to the fall of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime and in fighting the reactionary puppet who would take over."

In truth, however, the NPA's prospect of raising substantial revenues from PTC fees is brighter than its prospect of winning incontrovertible military victories.

After it was branded as a terrorist organization by the US State Department, the NPA has been reported to have suffered serious funding problems. This year, it will be more accurate to say, the oldest continuing communist insurgency in Asia will have its hands full just maintaining its active presence in its areas of operation. (The total number of "guerrilla fronts," in the Armed Forces' estimate, is 107.)

This is not to say that the NPA will not be able to mount serious attacks; like a wounded beast, a guerrilla movement is also dangerous when it is vulnerable. But consolidation, rather than escalation of the armed struggle, is a likelier objective for the CPP-NPA-National Democratic Front this year.

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, AFP spokesperson, summed up the state of the communist insurgency in these terms: Last year, NPA rebels "focused on strengthening and multiplying their front organizations as their political support for their armed struggle." And: "The NPA's atrocities... declined last year compared to 2002. This is because their intelligence—propaganda—organizational work have increased in their efforts to strengthen their national front organizations."

One probable reason is that the financial squeeze has forced the insurgency to consider alternative forms of funding. The practice of demanding PTC fees from candidates is of course an old one, but in the post-Sept. 11 world, it has acquired new significance.

By one estimate, that of the Army's Civil Affairs Group, the NPA could raise P2.25 billion during the election season.

This may be on the high side. Jorge Madlos, NDF spokesperson in Mindanao, said the communist movement in the island group raised P40 million in PTC fees in the 2001 elections. (The rebels also accept in kind, such as Armalite rifles.)

Whatever the total, the rebels would need the funds to keep the insurgency going, to make up for the loss in funding from abroad.

Madlos said the "revolutionary movement" was earmarking the PTC fees to finance its land reform, basic education and public health programs. Given the constraints that the insurgency is laboring under, this is an unlikely set of priorities.

The more accurate view is, the NPA needs the money to fund its daily operations. That is why it is a great pity that politicians giving in to the practice choose to see it simply as *real politik* on the local level. The candidates see it as necessary to their political survival.

It *is* a survival issue, but not for the politicians alone.

Why not use ballot paper intended for ACMs?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THERE is a Tagalog saying, "*Kung hindi mo makuha sa santong dasalan, kunin mo sa santong paspasan*," which roughly translates to "If you can't do it with prayer, do it with war." The Macapagal administration is obviously taking that Tagalog advice to heart with the disqualification case filed against opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. It is "an act of panic and desperation" of the opposite camp, said KNP spokesperson Rod Reyes. I think it is a tacit admission by the administration that it expects to be buried under a landslide of votes for FPJ like the unfortunate landslide victims in Southern Leyte and Surigao. The only way left to prevent that is to disqualify FPJ.

God knows they've tried almost everything else. They said FPJ is a dropout, implying that he is an ignoramus. But then they countered their own argument by recruiting a senatorial candidate who is also a dropout and a vice-presidential candidate who also has an image of being an ignoramus.

Then they said FPJ is only a movie actor but they themselves countered that argument by recruiting movie actors and actresses in their senatorial and local tickets.

And this is obviously what is causing all the panic: FPJ's rating in the poll surveys continues to rise steadily while that of GMA continues to drop. She is now the tailender; Sen. Ping Lacson rates higher than her. Clearly, something desperate has to be done.

Somebody in the administration camp must have blurted out: "Disqualify him!" (Sounds like "Crucify him!" *di ba*?) Early on, Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez tried that tact saying that FPJ is not a Filipino citizen but an American. Told that it was the real Fernando Poe Jr., an older brother who is dead now, who was the American citizen, and not the present FPJ whose real name is Ronald Allan Poe and used his brother's name as his screen name to capitalize on their father's name recall, Gonzalez dropped the issue like a hot potato. But now, in desperation and with nothing else to do, they are reviving it.

But of course FPJ is more Filipino than the *kastilaloys* and the Chinoys in Makati belittling FPJ's qualifications, repeating the mantra that he has no college degree. Which prompted Malang, the celebrated painter, who is a Born Again Christian and obviously an FPJ fan, to send me a clipping with a note that said "even Jesus Christ chose the 'uneducated.' I am referring to FPJ *na galit na galit ang mga kastilaloy sa* Makati Business Club."

The clipping carried a quote from Mark 1:16-17: "They were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men'."

"Not only was the Son of God born in an unlikely location and of unlikely parents, He chose his first followers at an unlikely place," began the excerpt written by David Egner. "He didn't search the religious schools for the most learned scholars. He didn't look among the ranks of brilliant military leaders. He stayed away from skilled statesmen and famous orators. Rather, Jesus went to the shores of Galilee and called out four common fishermen—Peter and Andrew, James and John.

"'Bad choice,' some might say. 'Uneducated.' Tough characters. What would they know about starting a worldwide movement? They couldn't work a crowd if they had to.'

"Now, on behalf of fishermen everywhere, let me say that they have many positive traits. They must be resourceful, courageous and patient. They must plan carefully and take care of their equipment. Such qualities are no doubt helpful in carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), but I don't think that's why Jesus chose those men. I believe He wanted to demonstrate how God can transform ordinary people into 'fishers of men.'

"God's work is often done by unlikely people from unlikely places—people like you and me..."

Egner added two quotes as a post script: "God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary work" and this short poem by Branon:

"You may not be a superstar,
"Your talents may be few;
"But God in His enablement
"Works out His will through you."

* * *

What if the Supreme Court declares null and void the Commission on Elections' contract on the purchase of the automated counting machines (ACMs)? The Comelec said that if it reverts back to manual counting, "the election has to be postponed for at least two months" because "there is no more time to prepare for the production and printing of paper ballots with security marks."

I personally think the Supreme Court should exercise judicial statesmanship and not allow a mere technicality to overcome what is already a reality so that the election would be held as originally scheduled. But even if the tribunal chooses to be technical, election lawyer Romulo B. Macalintal said that election could still push through as scheduled on May 10, 2004 without these ACMs. There is enough time to print the ballots for manual voting, he said.

To solve the "ballot paper problem," Macalintal suggested that the Comelec use the ballot paper intended for the automated polls for the manual system of voting. Since the paper for automated election had already been purchased by the Comelec, are already here, and are still blank, they could still be converted for manual election.

"Under Section 182 of the Omnibus Election Code, 'emergency ballots' could be used if there are no sufficient ballots for all registered voters... There is no reason why ballots using the paper intended for automated election could not be used for manual election," he said.

No, you don't

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

COMELEC Spokesperson Ferdinand Rafanan warns that if the Supreme Court voids the contract for the automation of elections, the Comelec will be forced to push back the elections by two months. Based on the Comelec's time-and-motion studies, he says, the elections will have to be postponed that long to mount the resources for manual counting. Of course, he says, that goes against the Constitution, which stipulates that the elections should be held in May, but that is just the way things stand.

Well, at the very least, it smacks of blackmail. What Rafanan is saying is that if the Comelec isn't able to deal with the counting because the Supreme Court scraps its deal for automation, it will be the Supreme Court's fault. That's a lot of crap. If the Comelec isn't able to deal with the counting because the Supreme Court scraps its deal for automation, it will be solely its fault. Or Benjamin Abalos'. The Comelec will have no one to blame but itself.

The problem is not automation per se, it is the particular type of automation the Comelec means to use. What makes it suspect is the deal or contract the Comelec made with a suspect IT provider. The rules the Comelec itself drew up on bidding for the automated counting and canvassing of election results were very clear. The bidding companies were to have been around for at least three years and their machines were to pass an accuracy test by at least 99 percent. The winning bidder turned out to be a company that failed massively on both counts. Why the Comelec expressly chose that bidder, only its officials can say.

That winning bidder is Mega Pacific eSolutions. It was incorporated only 10 days before the bidding. Yet the Comelec meeting en banc awarded the contract for automated counting and canvassing to it on April 15 last year. Gus Lagman, a member of the IT community, has been shouting his head off since then, protesting the iniquity, yet until he and his colleagues brought the case to court, or more specifically until the Supreme Court was all set to rule on it, no one seemed particularly bothered by it.

Contrary to Abalos' claim that Lagman's complaint was just sour grapes, Lagman never took part in the bidding.

Lagman, who has been with Namfrel from the start, has been one of the most ardent proponents of automated canvassing. He was one of those working closely with then Comelec Chair Christian Monsod to bring the idea to fruition. Monsod himself attests to it. They had been lobbying Congress for the wherewithal to implement it. It is no small irony, Lagman says now, that he would find himself trying to stop automated counting when it seems to be finally in place. But in fact, it is not in place. If the idea of automated counting has borne fruit at all, it is a much poisoned one. You bite into it, you die—or are seriously hospitalized.

Whether the automated counting system the Comelec has equipped itself with will be used for cheating or not may be argued to death without the point being settled. Certainly, there is much to suggest it. The very nature of the transaction that produced it does not augur well for its being used honestly. Shadowy deals do not produce enlightened results, cheating in biddings does not lend to trustworthy ends. Coupled with the fact that the Comelec arbitrarily cut the registration period by suspending registration for half a year last year, which threatens to disenfranchise by some estimates around 6 million voters, mostly first-time ones or the youth, you have to be naive not to suspect its officials are contemplating mayhem.

But whether the automated counting system will be used for cheating or not, the contract that has put it, or what passes for it, in the hands of the Comelec is an iniquity that must be stopped. It defrauds the taxpayers and puts the integrity of the entire elections in peril. Whatever its consequences, the Supreme Court has no choice but to rule on it according to its intrinsic merits. That is clearly to scrap it for the obscenity that it is. Covering up wrongdoing, or worse upholding it, in the thought that it will somehow produce beneficial results is the most dangerous—and foolish—thing there is. No good has ever yet come out of it.

Monsod himself, who knows whereof he speaks, says the Comelec has ample time to prepare for manual counting if and when the Supreme Court voids its contract with Mega Pacific, as it should. But it's more than that. The Comelec en banc, or to a man or woman, should be made to man the polling booths and help to count the votes themselves. That is the least the public deserves from those who these last few months have been counting things that are also made of paper, that also run into the millions, and that are also as valuable as ballots, at least for those who haven't got them. What time-and-motion studies is Rafanan talking about? The only time-and-motion studies his bosses have been making since last year are to measure the time it takes to hoodwink the public and going through the motion of defending the indefensible in ads in newspapers.

The service the Comelec officials en banc will render in manual counting does not of course preclude their prosecution afterward for, well, the official term is irregularities. It's criminal recklessness on their part that they have set automated counting back by another six years, or at least three—until the next senatorial elections. It is still imperative we replace the ballot box by automated voting, we can't go on living in the 19th century in this age and millennium. That can be done by the next set of Comelec officials after the elections.

We hope the current officials would by then be counting the one thing they should have a lot of in their hands: Time.

Faith

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE COMELEC'S preparedness or lack of it to handle the May elections, and whether or not we will fall back to selected automation or total manual elections is yet another burden of anxiety for the people. They await the decision of the Supreme Court on the validity of the Comelec's contract with the manufacturer of the counting machines—a decision that could leave us mired in manual counting (reliable information is that the Supreme Court will void the contract by a vote of 9-4-1 due to the ineffectiveness of the machines, and recommend to the Ombudsman the filing of corruption charges against those who entered into it). At the same time, there is a manifest lack of faith in the Comelec's capability to conduct clean and honest elections, and proof is the joint resolution of Congress to go into selected automation. Congress prefers selective automation because it does not believe the Comelec can handle full automation despite its insistence. As this column was being written, President Macapagal-Arroyo's action on the joint resolution—whether to let it lapse into law 30 days after its passage, or veto it—is also being awaited.

* * *

All these factors could critically affect not just the outcome of the elections scheduled for the second Monday of May 2004, but the holding of the exercise itself. Senate President Franklin Drilon opines that resetting the elections is possible under the Constitution, but that Congress and not the Comelec is empowered to do so. That power can't be disputed, but a consequence of resetting could be to strengthen fears in some sectors about the possibility of no elections (Noel)—fears being fanned by some groups for their own twisted ends.

One wishes that over the last six years since the 1998 elections, preparations for automation had been zealously undertaken; but we saw how all the bloody infighting inside the poll body in past years had harmed its efficiency. It's a nightmarish situation, and all of us have to work hard—and pray hard—that the coming elections will be orderly and honest, even though we nurse fears to the contrary.

* * *

Amid all the anxieties, it's timely to reprint the article by the great philosopher and humanist Albert Schweitzer titled "Man Belongs to Man," from his work, "The Teaching of Reverence for Life." It was sent to me during the Christmas season by former Rep. Oscar Santos of Quezon, who opined that it is "what Christmas is all about."

"Three kinds of progress are significant: progress in knowledge and technology; progress in the socialization of man; progress of spirituality. The last is the most important.

"As soon as man does not take his existence for granted, but beholds it as something unfathomably mysterious, thought begins. Ethical affirmation of life is the intellectual act by which man ceases simply to live at random and begins to concern himself reverently with his own life, so that he may realize its true value. And the first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings.

"To the primitive, this solidarity has narrow limits. It is confined, first to his blood relations, then to the members of his tribe, who represent to him the family enlarged. I have such primitives in my hospital. If I ask an ambulatory patient to undertake some small service for a patient who must stay in bed, he will do it only if the bedridden patient belongs to his tribe. If that is not the case, he will answer me with wide-eyed innocence: "This man is not brother of me." Neither rewards nor threats will induce him to perform a service for such a stranger.

"But as soon as man begins to reflect upon himself and his relationship to others, he becomes aware that men as such are his equals and his neighbors. Gradually he sees the circle of his responsibilities widening until it includes all human beings with whom he has dealings. In the preaching of Jesus, as in that of Paul the Apostle, it is a fundamental tenet that man has a duty toward every other human being. The idea of the brotherhood of all human beings is inherent in the metaphysics of most of the great religious systems. Moreover, since antiquity, philosophy has presented the case for humanitarianism as a concept recommended by reason.

"Throughout history, however, the insight that we have a wider duty toward human beings has never attained the dominance to which it is entitled. Down to our own times it has been undermined by differences of race, religion and nationality.

"Man belongs to man. Man is entitled to man. There is much coldness among us because we obey a law of proper reserve and do not dare to be as cordial as we really are. The ethics of reverence for life require that all of us somehow and in something shall act as men toward other men. Those who in their occupations have nothing so to give, and who posses nothing else they can give away, must sacrifice some of their leisure, no matter how sparse it may be.

"Fortunate are those who find some good cause in which they can act as a man for other men. Their own humanity must be enriched.

"Open your eyes and seek another human being in need of a little time, a little friendliness, a little company, a little work. It may be a lonely, an embittered, a sick or an awkward person for whom you can do something, to whom you can mean something. Perhaps it will be an old person or a child. Or else a good cause that needs volunteer worker. Do not lose heart, even if you must wait a bit before finding the right thing, even if you must make several attempts.

"None of us knows what he accomplishes and what he gives to humanity. That is hidden from us, and should remain so, though sometimes we are allowed to see just a little of it, so we will not be discouraged.

"Our age must achieve spiritual renewal. A new renaissance must come: the renaissance in which mankind discovers that ethical action is the supreme truth and the supreme utilitarianism. By it mankind will be liberated."

Burlesque

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

ALTHOUGH still reeling from almost daily expecting the unexpected in the positionings, alignments, realignments, disengagements, and various other sideshows performed by our political leaders and assorted characters, I had resigned myself to one exquisitely profound conclusion, derived, no doubt, from a gift of clairvoyance that I was totally unaware I had until now: the next government will be voted into office by moviegoers.

But for a while there, I thought this cinema of the absurd (it had long descended from theater, which does not allow the inaccessibility that is the nature of celluloid) had deteriorated into burlesque when former Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago broke her own vow to her departed son, filed her certificate of candidacy a few hours before deadline and joined the administration coalition, indiscriminately firing all the way.

And then I surveyed the geography, as a duly registered voter of Sulu, one of the provinces of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, also known as the poorest, the least literate, the most conflict-ridden of both the armed and religious kind, the most disease-afflicted, constantly in a state of war, and the most remote a.k.a. as the country's backdoor. What's in it for me and my fellow travelers?

Though I may have no reason to doubt his integrity—never mind if it is the least visible trait of our times—Raul Roco's promise of hope or its acronymic equivalent looks hopeless to me. It's been promised before; besides, the situation is crucial, desperate and urgent. Hope is a luxury I cannot afford right now.

Top cop Panfilo Lacson may be what this country, at least its peace and order situation, needs—The Enforcer. But based on what I know of him through his pronouncements, track record and image which I got mainly from media (I had a chance to go near him up close and personal, only once in my life; he didn't even return my smile and my greeting, didn't bother to say "thank you" for the copy of my newspaper that I gave him), he leaves me cold! Compassion may be the least of virtues for a leader of the strong kind, but one that appears to be incapable of it is someone we need like a hole in the head.

I may not agree with the method and the means that he represents and may not fault him for them, but I totally agree with Ka Roger Rosal in his phoned-in statements on ANC just now as I was writing this when he said, in so many words, that nothing less than a major surgery, a total transformation is the only cure for the ills we are suffering from today.

For me and for what I can safely say is the majority in Mindanao, including former rebel leaders I have talked with, nothing less than a charter change toward a federal system of government is the issue of this coming elections.

Therefore, it is through the prism of federalism that I view this rather barren landscape.

Roco has been virtually silent on this. President Macapagal-Arroyo on the other hand, has vowed to pursue it, and even, according to Speaker Jose de Venecia, agreed to make the supreme sacrifice of being a "transition" President for its sake.

Even just on that basis alone, I would cast my vote for her and her entire slate, notwithstanding my revulsion at the catch-tag they have labeled themselves with—"K-4" which is not only a cheap shot at being show biz, it also comes dangerously five digits close to the kennel. They don't deserve this self-inflicted name-calling; they don't even have the trait that is its saving grace, loyalty.

But coming from GMA with De Venecia beside her, and at the unholy eleventh hour like an afterthought, I hesitate to even think about it. What is it about the President that even if we have no reason to doubt her sincerity at the moment, almost everything she promises makes us feel we are being sold down the Pasig River? Is it the curse of the incumbent, or the fact that she promised not to run and made a complete turn-about without even the endearing honesty of Miriam to admit "I lied"?

Vice-presidential candidate Loren Legarda, who promises to lift the combined movie-television production from mere box-office blockbuster to the level of "Citizen Kane," has declared she is "open" to it, "after broad consultations, etc." Oh, Loren.

So what is our revered Aquilino Pimentel Jr. doing in that float? He was it who voted for the opening of the second envelope, who resigned his position as Senate president for that vote, who held the mike for GMA when she took her oath as President that high noon at Edsa, who has consistently advocated federalism right from the beginning when he was just a lonely, sometimes derided, sometimes ridiculed, voice in the wilderness. Oops, there goes another rubber tree plant in favor of another TV performer.

Maybe it is the perverse side of me, but Miriam's image comes like the ghost of elections past: her open-faced grief, unhidden by signature shades, not unlike Medea's in its intensity before national television, her telling you you're a lachrymose actress if she thinks you're one, her nonchalant admission she lied when she did, her blow-by-blow account of her negotiations to get a slot in any of the two leading groups, aware of her self-worth but humble enough to say a lot of good about the woman she had once condemned and with whom she is now aligned.

In all this burlesque she stands out, not because she acts best, but because she doesn't.

The future—the immediate one at least—is safe with her.

* * *

Comments to nm19@my.smart.com.ph

'Porqué no está en Español esto comentario'

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

BAGUMBAYAN is where the Spanish Taliban will murder José Rizál, every year like clockwork on Dec. 30, until Judgment Day. Pinoys get a free holiday between Christmas and New Year by which to ignore him. But after a hundred reruns of Rizal turning to the eternal sea of immortality at the crack of "*Fuego*!"—perhaps it's time to abolish Rizal Day? Move it to the Lenten season, where its lachrymose subject matter won't spoil that Christmas feeling bestowed by Spain in ages past and long forgotten by *indios ingratos*. Why bring up unpleasantries like theocracy at Yuletide, and dead national heroes?

But before ardent defenders of historical veracity could cry "*Què horror*!" Dick Gordon at Tourism opened the door to a new P120-million "Bagumbayan Light and Sound Museum" in the heart of the old Walled City of Intramuros. Here is a fun-house mirror of Philippine history under a Simon Legree Spain, full of lecherous friars and hapless *indios*, and a script of tyranny, oppression and Padre Dámaso. All this impious talk against the Spanish Taliban, which Apolinario Mabini called a "religious frailocracy," will now go on seven days a week, at a well-lighted place with 3D surround-sound, right in the old place of the *frailes*.

"*Que barbaridad!*" some exclaim at the "hate-filled" museum. But Rizal's execution, though touching and grand, was hardly as exciting as what follows. The Katipunan leader Jose Tagle blasts the Spanish general Aguirre off his high horse with a cannon stolen from the Guardia Civil near Zapote, as victorious Katipuneros smash advancing Spanish troops to smithereens. Tagle takes Aguirre's sword, gives it to Emilio Aguinaldo, who he is later captured with it by the Americans. It was not returned until 1946.

The kids and tourists will love Bagumbayan because the ambience is Disney-cinematic drama and Hollywood kitsch in a friendly but seriously air-conditioned place. With Jollibee afterwards. All the characters speak English with a telenovela accent. But if they didn't call it a "museum," Tourism would get less flack for its historical flaws. Imagine not mentioning *kamatis* and corn from the New World and the high-tech agriculture of plow-and-carabao taught by the *encomenderos*, to dumb *kaingineros*. "Museum" is reserved for places like the University of Santo Tomas—which is older than Harvard, don't you know?

But what was so bad about Spanish times, really? I think that Spain's greatest failure was selfishness. *Frailes* did not teach the *indios* to read or write, maybe because the *frailes* didn't want them to think, only to believe and obey. Spain withheld education and the Spanish language from the *indios*, not out of meanness, but for the sake of peace and order. Books were largely unknown. Even the Bible was forbidden reading material. It would've been too hard to explain. The *frailes* believed they could control the faithful by sealing off news of heretical disturbances in Europe, like Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation, Galileo Galilei's scientific revolution and the liberal democratic stirrings in Spain itself.

But that is also why the best Spanish by Filipinos are in two bitterly incandescent novels by Jose Rizal, then no more. Rizal broke the taboo and look what it got him—the same thing Prometheus got for giving men the fire of knowledge. In late 1896 there was active rebellion against the Crown and the Church, and by 1898 Rizal had inspired the first democracy in Asia. In him, the Spanish Taliban saw the new elite of *ilustrados* replacing them. In him, they felt justified with murder. But by killing him, no Filipino since has seriously wanted to be a Spaniard.

In less than a generation, America filled the hungry vacuum of four centuries under Spain by teaching everyone English and letting loose in this archipelago, the Thomasites, Hollywood, Madison Avenue, now MTV. They connected the Filipinos to the rest of human history and civilization, which arrived in this archipelago as a tidal wave of information, long suppressed, a thunderclap that awakened the sleepers of Spain's lost centuries. News of Greece and Rome, England and America electrified Filipino brains to life, science and industry. Our hearts would discover in Cervantes and Shakespeare and George Washington the profound truths already proven by Rizal—that all men are created equal and liberty is God's gift to every human being, not Spain's or America's. That is why we trade erudite barbs and commentaries in the barbaric tongue of English. Even the Hispanophile critics of Bagumbayan cannot fail to see the triple feral irony in their own Anglo-Saxon eloquence. *Que lastima*!

Translation is the test that only the greatest writers pass, like the creators of the powerful literary characters, Yahweh and Jesus and Frodo—all more durable, more real than their makers. The Yankees were new to Empire, and unlike the Spaniards, were insecure enough in themselves to respect talent and genius, even in little brown brothers. Even they could understand and agree with our Spanish version of Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin and Alexis de Tocqueville all rolled into one. That is how Rizal became our American-made national hero. But I think the Philippine aristocracy of the mind is quite done pondering upon Spain, and needs to consider America, democracy and our future. We need to ponder Aguinaldo's sword. Thanks to Rizal, we can do so for our own good, without fear of execution or excommunication. The only thing we have to fear now is elections. (*Visit my personal website http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com*)

Non-partisan news

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

IF we strictly follow the law, the campaign for national positions (president, vice president and senator) should start on Feb. 10 and end two days before the May 10 polls.

For local positions (representatives and local government offices), the drive to get the voters' support should commence on March 25 and cease on May 8. The two-day break is meant to cool down the passions of the candidates and their supporters before the coming of the "day of reckoning."

But the way things are moving, nobody seems to know about the time limitations on partisan activities. Campaign streamers can be seen in major streets. Some radio stations are airing campaign jingles already. The content of media outlets is mostly election-related.

The election fever has infected a lot of INQUIRER readers. Since the onset of the year, I have been receiving letters and e-mail asking me about the INQUIRER's choice for president and vice president. Or what criteria should be followed by the voters in choosing the men or women who will lead the country for the next six years.

The political leanings of the readers are obvious from the way they write. A reader who professed neutrality in the coming elections suggested that the newspapers publish the educational qualifications and work experience of the presidential candidates so "the voters will know who among them has the capability to maintain the present course of development in the country in the coming years."

Silent message

Why do I get the feeling that this reader is silently rooting for President Macapagal-Arroyo? It is apparent he believes in Ms Macapagal's program of government. The reference to educational background is a dig at Fernando Poe Jr.'s limited scholastic accomplishment. He skipped college education to help support his family when his father died at an early age.

A reader said the "INQUIRER should support a presidential candidate for 2004 because I think every sane Filipino should do his share in preventing an FPJ presidency, especially those in the media who can be very influential in shaping the people's perceptions."

I can state without fear of contradiction that this reader has no love lost for Da King, as Poe's supporters endearingly call him. In this reader's book, who by his choice of words strikes me as a professional, only the less than sane would support a Poe presidency.

Then there is this reader, a retired public school teacher, who thinks "the INQUIRER should help disseminate information about the qualifications of presidential candidates, for example, Secretary Raul Roco, who do not have the resources to pay for expensive advertisements in newspapers and television stations."

I have a sneaky feeling the reader's side reference to Roco was not accidental. The call for the newspaper to give less financially endowed candidates an even fighting chance against their richer rivals was a subtle way of endorsing the former education secretary's presidential ambitions. The veteran *maestra* must have benefited from some of the reforms that Roco instituted in the education department when he once headed it.

Editorial policy

I checked with the editorial staff the policies that the newspaper will apply in the coverage of the May 10 elections. Considering its reach and influence, it cannot be denied that the INQUIRER has a significant role to play in the political exercise that some political analysts say will spell the difference between the country moving in cadence with its developing neighbors and languishing at the economic cellar of this region.

As in previous polls, the INQUIRER will not endorse any presidential candidate. It will try to cover as extensively as possible the activities of the aspirants for the highest position in the land with the view to guiding the readers in making an informed decision on who they want to steer the country in the next six years.

As the managing editor puts it, paraphrasing the slogan of a TV station in the United States, the INQUIRER "will report the news, then let the readers decide for themselves."

This early, I anticipate that whichever way it goes the newspaper will be criticized by the presidential candidates for its reporting of election-related news. If something favorable is written about one candidate, expect the candidates who feel adversely affected by that report to cry "bias." In the same breath, if a published report is damaging to an aspirant, I will not be surprised if his handlers complain about the unfair treatment of their candidate.

I am amused by the reaction of politicians to news reports about them. They hardly say a word when they get favorable publicity. They think they deserve it.

But once an adverse news report comes out, they rail and rant and complain that the newspaper is, depending on the gravity of the perceived injury to their reputation, "in the payroll of their political enemies," "biased in its reporting," or "unfit to call itself a newspaper."

But this should not be taken to mean that the INQUIRER would ignore legitimate complaints about inaccuracy and lack of objectivity in the reporting of political news.

The rules of journalism are not suspended during campaign periods. With the future of the country at stake in the coming political exercise, all the more is it necessary for the newspaper to be accurate and fair in the reporting of the events leading to this most important component of a democracy—the free choice of its leaders.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Population economics

"Instead of making productive investments and savings, we spend everything on the needs of the population."

—Commission on Population executive director Tomas Osias, urging presidential candidates to present a platform that would address the issue of population management

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Shame for the infamous purges

PHILIPPINE LETTERS INQUIRER

THANK you for the INQUIRER's special report on the bloody purges of the Communist Party of the Philippines in the 1980s, and especially for the editorial "Cannibal revolution," identifying the deterministic view that the revolution devours its own children and continues to devour its own children. I feel ashamed...

I feel ashamed for the movement which I believed in and pledged my loyalty to, heart and soul, during those dark years of the Marcos dictatorship. I feel ashamed for the movement and the party which as an institution cannot feel ashamed. But my shame substitutes also for the leadership of the party that refuses to feel ashamed and ask forgiveness for the crimes it has committed. It is their stubborn deterministic view that makes them sound so inhuman and void of compassion, for claiming innocence and disclaiming responsibility.

Why did the purges happen? It is the law of contradiction, they say, that operates everywhere and therefore also in the movement. Who should be held responsible? Anybody else but the party, for its theory is correct, the party cannot be wrong. And so it seems is the CPP founder, Jose Maria Sison, who feels that he should be praised for rectifying the political errors of opportunism and upholding the basic principles of the revolutionary struggle. These are the words of a cold-blooded theoretician, as cold as the country he has sought refuge in. That is why I feel ashamed for a party that continues to devour its own children in a "revitalized" revolutionary movement. I feel concerned and compassionate for all those comrades, old and young, who continue this madness.

I know, by speaking out my shame for the errors and crimes committed by the party, I run the risk of being called a counter-revolutionary or a plain muddlehead, an enemy of the people. But so be it, I cannot keep silent. I feel ashamed also for my wife and children and for my sister-in-law who both lost their husbands in that bloody purge. I cannot keep silent because I feel concerned about the movement.

We cannot forget that traumatic experience. For their sake, we may not keep silent, we cannot consider the issue of the purges as settled.

How then do the victims of the communist purges get justice and can we close this dark chapter in the CPP history? President Macapagal-Arroyo has offered her aid to support the creation of a truth commission that will look into the purges. But of course, she has no business in doing so unless she first acknowledges and asks forgiveness, in the name of the military, from the innumerable victims of human rights violations perpetrated by State authorities under her administration.

I believe that the appropriate body to settle the issue of the bloody purges would still be the National Democratic Front Peace Commission. In the name of the CPP and the New People's Army and their entire membership, this commission could publicly express its shame and ask forgiveness for the crimes committed under its leadership. This hopefully could open the doors to a permanent peace settlement and make a definite end to the armed revolution.

—ARNOLD VAN VUGT,
Horeb Center,
Cagayan de oro City

An election prayer

LORD, we will have an election this year.

For this important election, please enlighten our voters not to vote for traditional politicians and celebrities who will do nothing to improve the lives of our poor people.

Please punish all our voters who will sell their votes and any candidate or person who will cheat.

Please punish our corrupt candidates and leaders.

Please don't allow any candidate who is a liar to be elected.

Lord, please listen to our prayers that our election will be peaceful and honest and that only incorruptible and competent candidates will be elected.

In Jesus' name, this is our special election prayer.

—OSCAR R. LANDICHO,
2 Goodenia Court,
Voyager Point, NSW Australia

No comment on sale of SSS shares

THE BOARD and management of Equitable PCI Bank have no comment to make at this time on the reported sale of the shareholdings of the Social Security System in the bank. They are not party to any negotiations taking place. This is solely a matter for shareholders to decide under our laws and regulations.

We can only point out that Equitable PCI Bank's financial performance over the past two years has been creditable and noteworthy. In 2003, we were very well within our targets. And we're looking at a very good year in 2004.

Perhaps, this is the reason why the bank is being looked upon very favorably by interested investors.

—FRANCISCO B. VISTA JR.,
director of corporate communications,
Equitable PCI Bank

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Reach of TV show hosts' insensitivity

AS a new The Filipino Channel subscriber based in California, I am re-thinking the wisdom of my decision after having seen a very disturbing event that took place in a very recent episode of "Masayang Tanghali Bayan."

There was this game contestant who was asked by one of the two male hosts (one of them was Randy Santiago, and the other looked a lot like Willie Revillame) what her wish was for the new year. She tearfully replied, "*Sana po gumaling na ang nanay ko* (I hope my mother gets better)." The hosts then asked the woman what was wrong with her mother, to which she sadly replied, "*Ubo* (Cough)." Her response elicited raucous, knee-slapping laughter from both male hosts, plus a slighting comment to the effect of "*Ubo lang pala, eh* (It's only coughing after all)" or something like that.

My first question is, how stupid does one have to be not to consider that this woman may not be effectively articulating the gravity of her mother's condition? That her mother may very well be suffering from some grave form of pneumonia and the best way this poor lady was capable of describing it was by calling it "*ubo*"? And as if belittling the contestant's mother's plight were not enough, the two male hosts then proceeded to (in what any yardstick of decent behavior would clearly amount to sexual harassment) massage her shoulders and back numerous times for more than a minute. The clearly uncomfortable contestant finally shrugged off one of the hosts' hands. And just when I thought the hosts couldn't sink deeper into the depths of cruelty, they both insisted that the contestant demonstrate for the viewers exactly how her mother coughed. "*Sige na, gayahin mo paano umubo 'yung nanay mo* (Okay, demonstrate to us how your mother coughs)!"

They kept at it for such a long time, it pained me to watch the humiliation this woman had to endure in order to win the money she needed to obtain treatment for her mother. I prayed she would win, and thank God she did. These guys appear to revel in their social status and position of control over the clearly impoverished people who join their show's games.

Willie Revillame fired? Good. One down, one to go. I say fire the other arrogant bastard as well.

—MARELA FLICK,
The Orange County Register,
625 N. Grand Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701

Rudeness at LTO

MY siblings and I, accompanied by our father, went to the Land Transportation Office last December to apply for our students' permit. Before we left our home, we checked out the LTO site on the Internet to find out if we had the necessary requirements and if there was an application form available which we could print out and fill out at home. The application form was available so that was what we did.

When we got to the LTO section where the application for students' permit was, the old lady at Counter 6 rudely told us, "*Hindi naman 'yan ang opisyal na* application form *at maraming kulang 'yan. Lagyan ninyo ng* birthdate, height and weight *ang* application form *na 'yan* (That's not the official application form, there is some information lacking. Put your birthdate, height and weight in that application form)!" I was very irritated by the way she spoke to us so I replied "*Eh, 'yan ho ang* application form *sa* website *ng* LTO. *'Yan na ho ang ginamit namin para mas* convenient *sa amin. Eh, sana pala hindi na lang linagay 'yang* application form *na 'yan sa* website *kung hindi rin pala* official *'yan at maraming kulang. Siyempre para sa amin alam namin na pwede 'yang gamitin* (But that's the application form found in the LTO's website. You should've not included that in the official website if the information needed in the form isn't complete. Since it's in your website, we thought all along that nothing's wrong with the form)."

The old lady replied "*Yan ang pinalagay ng mga nasa taas na kala mo alam lahat ng sistema! O sige isingit ninyo na lang kung saan ninyo masisingit 'yung mga hinihingi ko na impormasyon* (That's what the higher ups who think they know how the system works want! Okay, just insert the information needed in the form)."

This kind of scene shows the lack of politeness of many government employees and the unreliability of government systems when they exist. This is the second government agency where employees are impatient and loutish. The other government agency is the Social Security System on East Avenue, Quezon City.

—SHIELA-MARIE Q. NACHOR,
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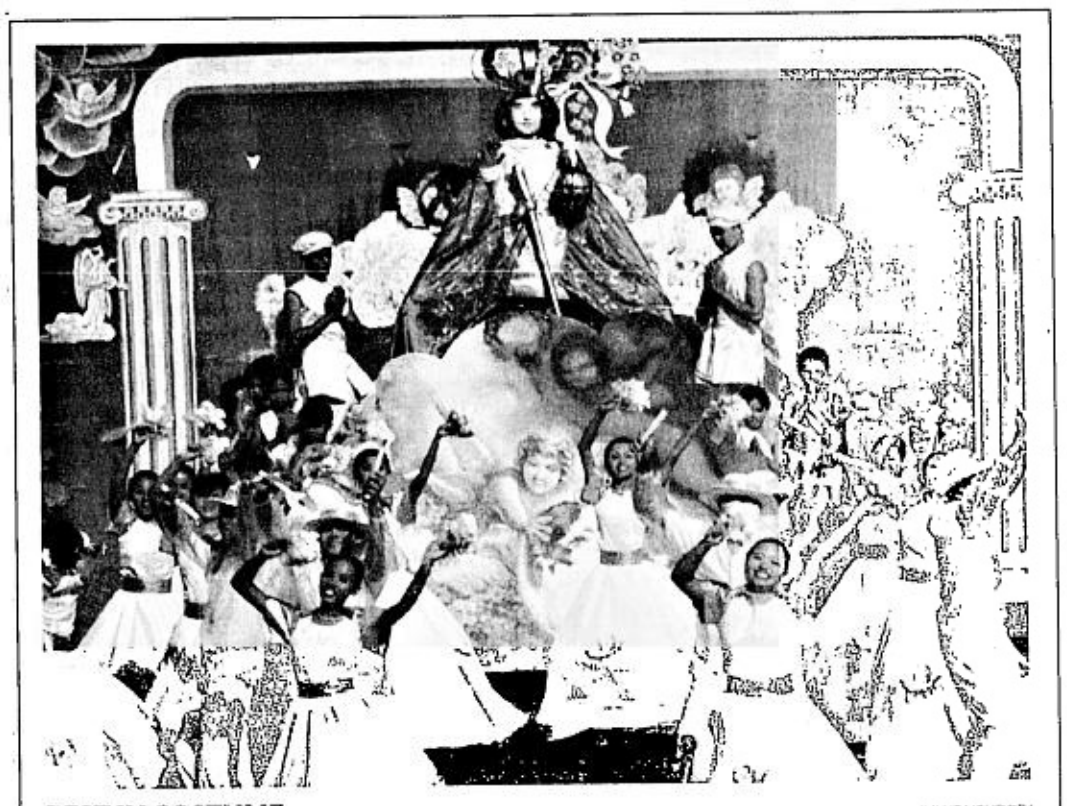


BEST IN COSTUME JUNJIE MENDOZA

Students of the Dalaguete High School of Dalaguete, Cebu, who won third in the Sinulog sa Kabataan sa Lalawigan, show their wares during a performance in Cebu City yesterday.

By Christian V. Esguerra, Mei Magsino and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE MILITARY yesterday taunted New People's Army guerrillas to give their best shot after government troops successfully foiled a raid on a power plant of the National Power Corp. in Calaca, Batangas on Saturday.

Although four soldiers were killed in the raid, the military said it was a victory more for the Armed Forces than for the NPA.

"Now that we have shown the NPA that we are determined to defend and really pursue our mandate, its credibility, if there was one, has actually dwindled," military spokesperson Lt. Col. Danilo Lucero told the INQUIRER.

Lucero said the failure by communist rebels to raze the power facility, losing four of their comrades in the process, was proof of their "vulnerability" despite pronouncements of intensified offensives against the government.

One of the slain rebels was identified as Dondon "Mawi" Manzano.

In anticipation of more NPA attacks, the AFP was now reviewing security requirements of all power facilities and cellular phone sites nationwide.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday declared an intensified military operation against communist rebels.

Ermita also belittled the NPA assault, saying the attack could probably be a concerted effort by the NPA to show the government they are still a force to reckon with.

"Our statistics from Dec. 10, 2003 to Jan. 6, 2004 showed that there were hardly any violent incident reported," Ermita said, "This means that since there was an obvious decrease of NPA strength, what happened yesterday was just a show of force."

About 30 NPA guerrillas of the Melito Glor Command attacked the Philippine Air Force detachment near Napocor's coal-fired plant in Calaca, according to Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla.

The rebels are now being tracked down by the military with the help of Calaca residents who provided details of the NPA's escape route.

Killed in the foiled raid were Air Force men—Airman Ryan Cabalida, Sergeants Edgardo Micua and Erwin Rigos and Air Force 2nd Class Reynaldo Carandang. They will receive posthumous honors for their gallantry.

A Mindoro-based NPA unit staged the raid at around 1:45 a.m. after Napocor's management consistently refused to pay revolutionary taxes, Lucero said, quoting Brig. Gen. Efren Orbon, commander of the 202nd Infantry Brigade in Batangas.

Lucero said the NPA had sent demand letters in June and August last year asking Napocor to pay revolutionary taxes, prompting the plant management to request for military security.

Recovered in the area following the one-hour gun battle were two light anti-tank weapons, an M-203, a container of gas, and 14 "combat packs" containing anti-government documents.

The Batangas raid was only one of several coordinated NPA attacks in key areas beginning last Tuesday.

The NPA rebels destroyed a Globe Telecom cell site in Dumarao, Capiz, burned three buses in Canlaon City and a cargo truck owned by a sugar planter in Silay City, Negros Occidental.

Ermita said Saturday's attack in Batangas could have been a way of the NPA to show that it still has a strong force, despite military studies that prove the rebel forces' population decreased by four percent last year.

Ermita also said that with the elections coming, the military is studying all possible options to stop the NPA from collecting revolutionary taxes or campaign fees from candidates."

Additional PAF soldiers are now manning the detachment while police continues on patrolling the area.

More security guards have also been added to secure the power plant.

Satur: Voters may leave blank spaces for president, veep

LUCENA CITY—Left to choose which candidate for president and vice-president are the "lesser of evils," the public may opt to leave blank the space allotted for the top posts in their ballots, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo predicted.

Ocampo observed that the trend among political camps of resorting to "political expediency and opportunism," would have the likely effect of disenchanting voters from even making their choices for president and vice president.

"Choosing which candidate (for president and vice president) to vote for becomes a very daunting task," he said.

Ocampo said the voting public has more reason to look toward party-list groups for reliable and principled representation in governance.

"In this season of uninhibited political vacillation, the party-list system presents an embankment that can shield the interests of the people from marauding political opportunism," Ocampo said.

In an earlier interview, Robert de Castro, Bayan Muna deputy secretary general, however, has made it clear, that if they decide not to endorse any candidate for the top posts, "it doesn't mean boycott."

"We are not obliged to extend our support, anyway," he said in an interview here.

But De Castro stressed that any national candidate needs Bayan Muna's 1.7 million votes. "It's solid and organized. No candidate would be able to run off win a big margin. So, our support is a big factor."

"But we are not willing to give our votes, if ever, to the candidates with records of anti-people activities like GMA and Ping," he stressed.

But he quickly made it clear that their votes would not necessarily go for Fernando Poe Jr. or Raul Roco.

For Gerry Corpuz, spokesperson of Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya sa Pilipinas, a nationwide organization of militant fisherfolk claiming at least 80,000 membership, explained that "as a matter of principle and policy, we don't endorse candidates because all presidential aspirants are generally the same."

"But we will challenge all these presidential aspirants to bare their positions on major issues like land reform, US intervention, peace talks and other burning issues that affect most of the Filipino people," Corpuz said in a phone interview.

He said the next president after President Macapagal-Arroyo would just follow her footsteps as chief political representative of the ruling system and rabid puppet of the US.

"At this point, Pamalakaya's electoral plan for the campaign period is to frustrate GMA's re-election bid," Corpuz said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

8 Bohol mayoral bets running unopposed

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—The campaign period has not even began yet but it is already all over for eight mayoralty aspirants in Bohol who are running unopposed in the May 10 elections.

Unchallenged in their reelection bids are incumbent Mayors Dominisio Chatto of Balilihan, Ernesto Herrera II, Calape; Bienvenido Molina, Alicia; Fanuel Cadelina, Bilar; Sofronio Apat, Dagohoy; Gabino Redulla, Maribojoc; and Requillo Samuya, San Isidro.

Mayoralty aspirant Leon Calipusan of Loboc, who lost his bid in the 2001 polls, is assured of the win this time, as he is unopposed.

Also virtual winners except their proclamation are reelectionist Vice Mayors Victoria Chatto of Balilihan, Virgenio Madrinan, Alicia; Eleuterio Tejada, Bilar; Artemio Delfin, Loboc and Antonino Baldo of Dimiao.

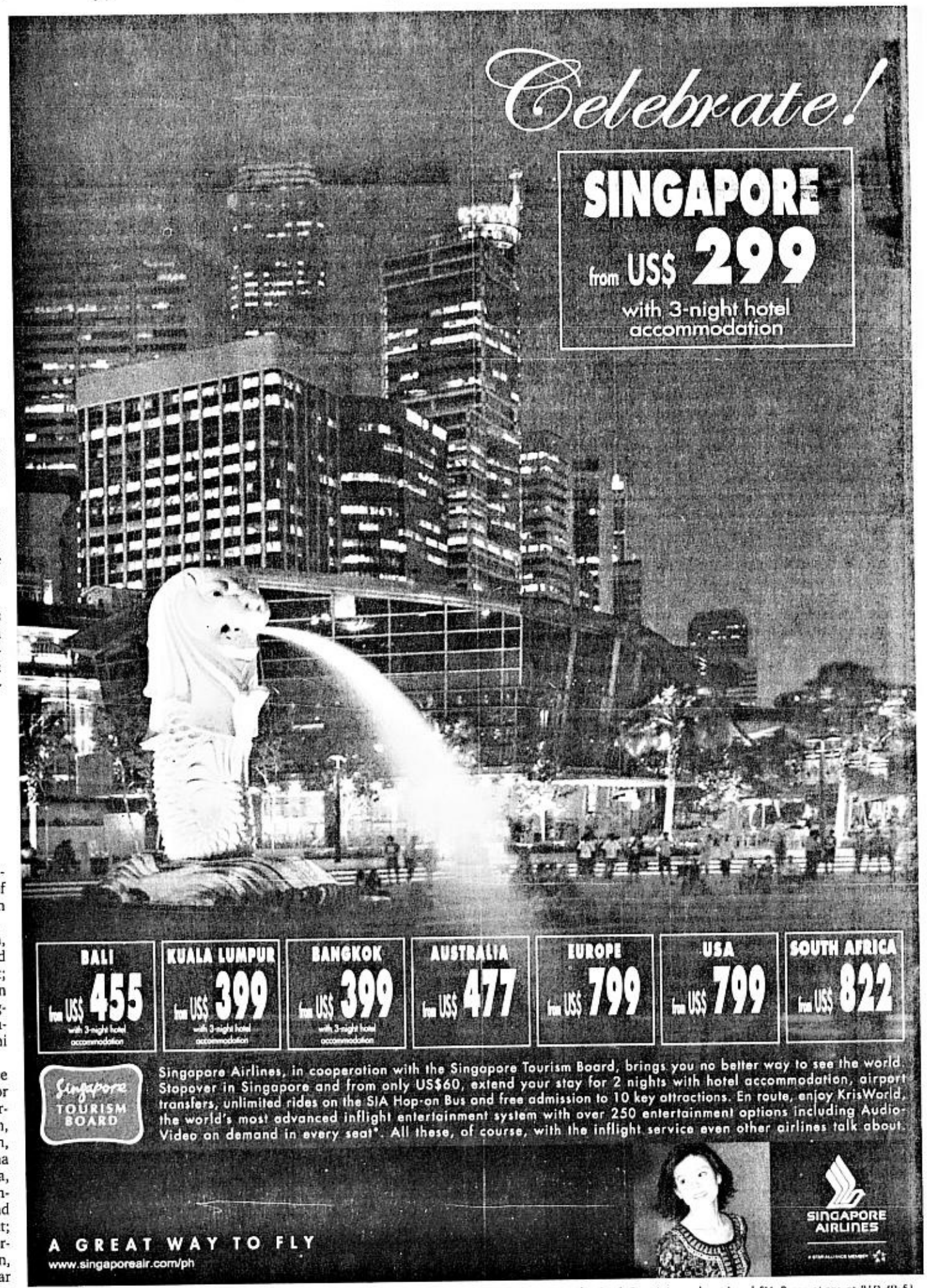
Former Philippine Councilors League provincial federation president Jesus Yves Yu is also uncontested in the vice mayoral race in Calape.

A total of 18 towns feature one-on-one match-ups for mayor, 16 of them reelectionists except those in the towns of Danao and Trinidad.

These towns are Antequera, Corella, Cortes, Danao, Loon and Panglao in the first district; Getafe, Inabanga and Trinidad in the second; and Batuan, Catigbian, Garcia-Hernandez, Guindulman, Jagna, Lila, Loay, Mabini and Sevilla in the third.

Also presenting one-on-one fights for the post of vice mayor are 30 towns including Alburquerque, Antequera, Baclayon, Catigbian, Cortes, Dauis, Loon, Maribojoc, Panglao and Sikatuna in the first district; Buenavista, Dagohoy, Danao, Getafe, Inabanga, Pres. Garcia, Sagbayan and Trinidad in the second district; and Anda, Batuan, Carmen, Garcia-Hernandez, Guindulman, Jagna, Lila, Loay, Mabini, Pilar and Sevilla in the third district.

All 21 candidates in Pilar town, including three bets for mayor, two for vice-mayor and 16 for councilors are running as independents.



Cebu vies for longest barbecue grill

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—As the country braces itself for the challenges of the New Year, the "Queen City of the South" is gearing up to host another Guinness World Record attempt.

Timed with the opening of the week-long Sinulog Festival, the city government of Cebu and the private sector have spearheaded the putting together of what could be the longest barbecue grill in the world, dubbed "Sugbayanihan," to beat the existing record of 613 meters held by Sicuani, Peru.

Sugbayanihan was derived from the Cebuano word *sugbahan* (barbecuing) and the Pilipino word *bayanihan* (helping each other).

Yesterday, more than 1,000 barbecue vendors and members of the city's urban poor community put up a 1,300 meter long grill that extends from uptown Fuente Osmeña Boulevard to Sancianco Street in downtown Cebu City.

Starting Saturday night, the grills were positioned and welded, except in the major intersections. At 1 p.m. yesterday, traffic was rerouted and by 5 p.m., the intersections were closed and the welding of the grills were completed.

Selling booths, stages, tables and chairs were also placed along Osmeña Boulevard up to Sancianco St.

Cultural dancers welcomed visitors, who could delight themselves by getting their faces and bodies painted too.

Members of the Geodetic Engineering of the Philippines measured the length of the grill.

Under the guidelines set by the Guinness World Record, the construction should be one long purpose-built barbecue with grills connected accordingly.

Another guideline set was that the meat should be cooked in a traditional manner by competent cooks.

Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Rama said the private sector is spearheading the Sugbayanihan in coordination with the city government.

Rama said Sugbayanihan is one of the many highlights of the Sinulog 2004, a festival held in honor of Cebu's patron saint, the Señor Sto. Niño. He said the event, which was conceptualized since July last year, hopes to make Cebu famous again as it endeavors to make it to the Guinness World Record.

"It will be an additional showcase and it will attract not only the Cebuanos but many of our local and foreign tourists who would be on the road to take part of this economic activity," Rama said.

Last year, Cebu, through the shoe manufacturers of Carcar, a southern town about 40 km from this city, had attempted to make it to the Guinness World Record by making the country's biggest shoe, beating the leather shoes produced in Marikina in 2002.

The giant taupe brown bulldog by the Cebu Carcar United Footwear Manufacturer Association, Inc. measured 7.6 meters long, 2.9 meters wide and 4.2 meters high compared to the leather shoes in Marikina that measure 5.5 meters long, 2.25 meters wide and 1.83 meters high.

However, until this time, the shoemakers in Carcar failed to produce a pair for the giant shoe.

For the Sugbayanihan, Rama said the main sponsor for the event would be the South East Asia Food Inc. (Safi), makers of Datu Puti products, which paid for the cost of putting up the 1,300-meter grill.

He said *sugbahan* (grilling food) is a popular cooking tradition in Cebu, as evidenced by the numerous grill establishments and restaurants found all over the different cities and towns in this province.

Anna Conejero, advertising agent of Safi, said the barbecued items would be sold from P6 to P10 each. The barbecue dishes would either be grilled chicken or pork.

She said the Datu Puti Sugba sauce would be introduced and used in the event. This sauce is a barbecue marinate with tocino flavoring that would bring about the red coating of the grilled dishes when cooked.

"It is a unique event . . . because it is one that hopes to foster community solidarity by getting Cebuanos to rally together for a worthy cause. Only through a community effort will they be able to break the Guinness World Record," she said.

Rama said the city government and the Sinulog committee would help mobilize the barangays, security forces and the different associations of vendors and even schools and volunteers to take part in the event.

15th eaglet hatched in Davao

THE NEW arrival

DAVAO CITY—The first Philippine eagle for 2004 and the 15th eaglet bred in captivity since 1992, was hatched Wednesday evening at the Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, Baguio District here.

The still unnamed eaglet, which weighed 123.8 grams, was the third offspring of female eagle Kahayag and male eagle Junior.

Kahayag and Junior conceived other birds in September and November of 2000.

All hatched eaglets from both parents are products of artificial insemination.

The new eaglet boosted the PEC's stock to 30 eagles, including those previously caught in the wild.

Like all previously hatched eaglets, the newly hatched bird needs godparents, who would foot the bill for its feeds and other expenses.

The PEF-Adopt-an-Eagle Program aims to provide private individuals and companies the chance to become godparents of an eagle for P100,000 per year for six years.

The Philippine Eagle, the world's largest bird of prey, was declared an endangered species in 1995 and was named the country's national bird in 1995.

It is known to be one of the bird species with the lowest birth rates.

Only about 500 pairs of eagles remain in the wild. The PEC aims to boost the dwindling eagle population. *Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

USC Congratulates Its 2003 Achievers

Corrine Alphen Y. Cordero
One of the 2003 Ten Outstanding Students of the Phils.
Magna Cum Laude, AB Economics

USC-ECE
1st Place - 24th National IECEP Quiz Show held at New Era University, M.M. December 6, 2003

Board Examinations Topnotchers

Engr. Lexter R. Gimenez
1st Place Chemical Engineering
Nov 2003 Licensure Exams

Chemistry

Name	Place
Joni Flor L. Monteveros	5th, Sep 2003

USC ranked 5th as a school of Chemistry nationwide.

Accountancy

Ronan Joseph C. Isla, CPA	6th, May 2003
Kathleen Kaye T. Yap, CPA	18th, May 2003

USC Passing Rate - 21.00%

Architecture

Arch't. Buck Richnold I. Sia	9th, Jun 2003
Arch't. Ferdinand V. Wong	9th, Jan 2003
Arch't. Romy E. Paquibot	12th, Jan 2003
Arch't. Kelvin Armand P. Go	13th, Jan 2003
Arch't. Anton Giovanni A. Dizon	16th, Jan 2003
Arch't. Carina O. Abella	20th, Jun 2003
Arch't. Carlos Pio O. Zafra	20th, Jan 2003

USC Passing Rate - 58.49%

Fine Arts in Interior Design

Adrian P. del Monte	10th, Oct 2003

USC Passing Rate 60.00%

Engr. Leelyn Lee Yu Yap
1st Place Civil Engineering
Nov 2003 Licensure Exams

Civil Engineering

Name	Place
Engr. Albert Vinson Abelgas-Young	6th, Nov 2003
Engr. Andrew Vincent Uy Ong	10th, Nov 2003

Electrical Engineering

Engr. Mark Anthony T. Grande	6th, Nov 2003

USC Passing Rate - 77.70%

Chemical Engineering

Engr. Jeffroger H. Kho	9th, Nov 2003

USC Passing Rate - 51.51%

Electronics & Communications Eng'g

Engr. Cesar B. Salipot	15th, Nov 2003
Engr. Mark Philip C. Cordova	18th, Nov 2003
Engr. Levi E. Suganob	18th, Nov 2003

USC Passing Rate - 55.00%

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Ex-CPP leader clarifies role in Mindanao purge

By Grace C. Albasin
PDI Mindanao Bureau

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—One of the alleged leaders of the communist purge in Mindanao on Friday said difficulty in communication led to the unnecessary execution of cadres suspected of being government agents.

Benjamin de Vera, former head of the Communist Party of the Philippines' Mindanao Commission, said he was attending a plenum in Manila from December 1984 to April 1985, when the "Kampanyang Ahos" in Mindanao was launched.

De Vera, now a project director of the Department of Agrarian Reform, said Salvador Baz and Nathaniel Quimpo, whom he appointed caretaker of the Mindanao Commission during his absence, launched Kahos in February 1985.

"None of us (in the higher party leadership) knew that Kahos was launched in Northern Mindanao in February 1985 (because we were) having a plenum in Luzon," he said.

De Vera said he only learned about a campaign aimed at weeding out suspected deep penetration agents (DPAs) in October 1985, or eight months later, when Baz submitted a report to him about it.

In the report, De Vera said Baz was boasting that the campaign was becoming successful but did not mention about executions.

"It is going well," he quoted Baz as saying.

De Vera said he immediately drafted a guideline "on how to conduct the probe on spying," out of fear that it might lead to a widespread torture of suspected spies.

He said he reiterated that torture should not be employed in extracting confessions.

De Vera said he immediately sent the guideline to Jorge Madlos alias Ka Oris of the National Democratic Front in Mindanao so the campaign could be implemented without bloodshed.

Despite the guideline, the purge continued in various parts of Mindanao. "Probably, the guideline did not reach Ka Oris. It even took me three months before I could establish a communication line with him," De Vera said.

Madlos admitted the purge was a mistake but said the blame should mainly be put on its architects such as De Vera, Baz, Quimpo and Ricardo Reyes.

"They are no longer with the movement so we assumed responsibility for the campaign," he said. Reyes now works with Akbayan, while Baz works for a non-government organization in Misamis Occidental. Quimpo is reportedly writing a series against the CPP-NPA.

The communist movement had reportedly paid P10,000 to the families of victims of the purge in Mindanao.

De Vera said even if he had no direct knowledge of the killings, he was in part responsible.

Madlos said the CPP wants to indemnify more victims but that "we have no way of identifying them."

"The key people are not with us anymore. We would help them the best we could," Madlos said.

ROUNDUP

US troops to stay

ZAMBOANGA CITY—American troops involved in training Filipino soldiers will have to stay until March despite the culmination of the military exercises last month. Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said the American soldiers were given a three-month phase-out period for the "transfer of equipment from Zamboanga City to Luzon or to their point of origin." Southern Command deputy spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Baccaro said three Filipino officers and 109 enlisted personnel completed the week-long Light Infantry Battalion training in December. Joint Task Force Special Operation Philippines chief Lt. Col. Anthony Aball said their extended stay in the Philippines is part of the mutual commitment expressed by the two governments particularly on the campaign against global terrorism. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Fishing vessels' crew held

DAVAO CITY—Maritime policemen on Monday arrested the crew of two fishing vessels found illegally fishing in the waters of the Island Garden City of Samal (IgaCos). Col. Orville Napoles, chief of the 11th Regional Maritime Office, said the crew of FB Carleo and FV Crebby were caught fishing off Talikud Island. Napoles said the crew of FB Carleo, a boat owned by Leonora Cascabel of Toril District, went into fishing about four kilometers from the shores of Talikud Island while those manning the FV Crebby fished about a kilometer away from the shorelines. Napoles said the two boats' 68 crew were released after charges had been filed against them. The IgaCos government announced it was also filing charges. Under the city's local fishing ordinance, violators could be fined up to P20,000.
Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

14 nabbed for guns

DAVAO CITY—Fourteen violators of the gun ban have been arrested here since its implementation on Dec. 15. Chief Supt. Isidro Lapeña, regional police director, said the suspects yielded various types of firearms. He said eight were nabbed in Davao City, three in Davao del Norte, two in Davao Oriental and one in Compostela Valley. Lapeña said the strict implementation of the gun ban resulted to the zero-casualty of the recent Christmas and New Year celebrations. He said around 66 joint PNP and Comelec checkpoints were established in different parts of the region to ensure the peaceful and orderly elections in May.
Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Blast wounds vendor

KIDAPAWAN CITY—A grenade explosion inside the public market here on New Year's eve wounded a vendor. But authorities dismissed insinuations that terrorists were behind the explosion inside the retail store owned by Editha Gallano, which wounded her son-in-law, Rino Flores. Police investigators said they found out that a day before the explosion, Gallano had a verbal tussle with a group of unidentified men.
Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Car thief nabbed

AGONCILLO, Batangas—Police nabbed a suspected car thief in this town, and recovered one of the stolen cars on Jan. 2. Elmer Sulit, 34, of Tagaytay City, one of the men who forcibly took the Honda CRV of Milagros Martinez, 33, of Barangay Tubig Ibaba here, was aboard another stolen car, when arrested at a checkpoint in Barangay Caylaway, Nasugbu. The other two escaped. Another victim, Ma. Teresita Olaso, 32, a student driver, reported that two armed men forcibly took the Mitsubishi Lancer car she was driving. The car, which belongs to the Balayan Driving Academy was found hours later in Barangay Baynilad, Nasugbu, but the suspects escaped. *Mel Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Suspected pushers killed

SAN JOSE, Batangas—What looked like murder at first sight turned out to be a drug-related ambush after police found 15 grams of shabu on the driver's seat of a slay victim on Monday. Victims Rogel de los Reyes, 37, of Barangay Banaba, Batangas City, and a friend identified only as Ronron were on their way to San Jose aboard his red Honda Civic car when they were shot at by unidentified armed men. The suspects, aboard an L-300 van sprayed the two victims with bullets from a 5.56-cal. and M16 rifle. The two sustained multiple bullet wounds and died on the spot, while the suspects fled to the direction of Lipa City. When police came to the crime scene, they found the shabu still on De los Reyes' seat.
Mel Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

UN team brings relief items to landslide survivors

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN CITY—A six-man mission from the United Nations Disaster Management System visited the landslide areas in Panaon Island last week, bringing with them tents and medicines for the survivors of the tragedy.

The team also surveyed the affected areas and assessed the immediate needs of the victims of the tragedy that hit the island five days into Christmas.

The team members came from the UN Development Program (UNDP), Unicef, World Health Organization and Food Agriculture Organization.

Monito Francisco, UNDP's representative in the team, told provincial officials in a meeting upon their arrival here on Thursday that at least $65,000 (about P3.08 million) had been initially coursed through the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), aside from medicines and school supplies, for the 3,000 people affected by the tragedy.

The UN mission members met with the mayors of the three towns that were badly hit by killer landslides asking what they would need most.

San Ricardo

In San Ricardo town, Mayor Virginia Mejia told them to bring in heavy equipment to clear Barangay Pinut-an of boulders and debris. At least 100 houses in the area were either buried in mud or swept to the sea after the mudslide and flash flood hit the village on Dec. 20. Twenty-three persons were reported dead or missing.

Mejia was herself trying to cope with the tragedy, as her husband was among those who remained missing.

A councilman of Pinut-an said the mayor has refused to believe her husband is dead until his body is found.

Nineteen families were still being housed at the barangay national high school, preventing the resumption of classes in the school. Other victims opted to live with their relatives.

Tents brought by the UN team would be used either to house some of the evacuees or as temporary classrooms of dislocated students, town officials said.

A relocation site was already identified at a land adjoining the high school grounds but it would not be used until experts from the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences (MGB) could attest that it would be a safe site.

San Francisco

In San Francisco town, Mayor Francisco Yuboc told the team that they also needed equipment to take out debris and soil that covered more than half of the town's ricefields.

"Our farmers could not start planting rice because of the soil that covered the ricefields," he said.

The fishermen also needed fishing gears and boats for their livelihood. "There's also the problem of potable water since the main reservoir that serves the people in the town proper was busted by the landslides," the mayor said.

Yuboc said they have found a relocation site for the landslide victims of Barangay Punta but like in San Ricardo, town officials were also told to wait for the MGB experts to determine the safety of the area.

The UN team left a six-month supply of medicines for common colds, coughs, fever and stomach disorder.

The landslides in Barangay Punta buried 95 houses. Around 20 houses remained standing in the barangay but were already abandoned by the owners. At least 27 families were still at the evacuation center at the San Francisco Parish Church while 50 other families stay with relatives.

In Liloan town, where 23 people had perished in landslides and floods, town officials also asked for fishing gears, boats and farm implements since most of the town's folk depended on farming and fishing.

Republic of the Philippines
City of Manila
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

NOTICE

ALL MANILA BUSINESS TAXPAYERS

You are hereby reminded that payment of Business Taxes, Business Permits and Other Regulatory Fees for CY 2004, without penalty, is on or before January 20, 2004

For your added convenience, the Manila Taxpayer's Lounge will also be open to the public on the following dates:

Saturday, January 10, 2004 -- 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 11, 2004 -- 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 17, 2004 -- 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 18, 2004 -- 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Kindly pay your taxes early to avoid the deadline hassle.
Manila, January 5, 2004

Liberty M. Toledo
City Treasurer

Jose L. Atienza, Jr.
City Mayor

MAYNILA KITA

Republic of the Philippines
City of Manila
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

NOTICE

ALL MANILA REAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS

Owners or administrators of real properties in Manila are hereby notified that payment of real property taxes for the First Quarter, CY 2004, without penalty, is on or before March 31, 2004

The next quarterly installments are as follows:

2nd Quarter -- On or before June 30, 2004
3rd Quarter -- On or before September 30, 2004
4th Quarter -- On or before December 31, 2004

Be it known also that prompt quarterly payment entitles taxpayers to a 15% discount for the first month of the quarter, and 10% discounts for the second and third months of the quarter. On the other hand, a 20% discount will be granted if real property taxes for CY 2004 are paid in full on or before January 31, 2004.

For your added convenience, the Manila Taxpayer's Lounge will also be open to the public on the following dates:

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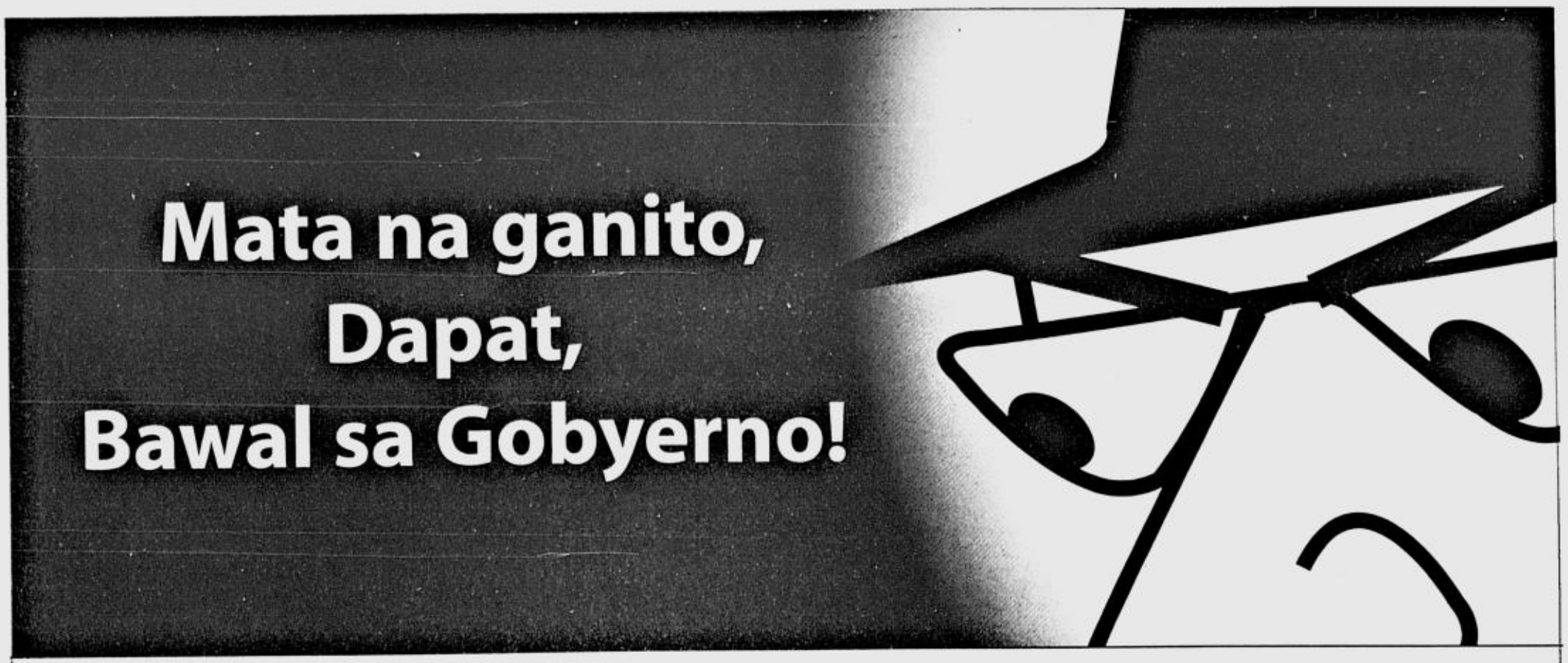

Flush Government of Traitors to National Interest!

As one seeking a fresh mandate to become President of the Republic, President Gloria Arroyo must, first and foremost, be clear with her policy regarding the integrity question of her current (and would-be) Official Family.

For one, after so much has been said against a certain Mr. Alberto Lim, we are alarmed to see him still arrogantly perched at the Civil Aeronautics Board. For the public to know, *Lim is the CAB official who was exposed as a mole of the US*

Because of the damning revelations against him and his cohorts, Bertie Lim brought about the unprecedented political unity of leading administration and opposition Senators, with Senators Joker Arroyo, Serge Osmena and Vicente Sotto recently in chorus for his immediate removal from office.

Mrs. President, do you cradle personalities with questionable loyalty to the flag? What is with Lim that his staying power is so overwhelming that you seem to be too willing to lose larger mass support, even that of your noted allies?

And very recently, word from the corridors of power is that another AGILE agent, Mr. Victor Limlingan, is being considered for appointment in one sensitive Cabinet posts. Incidentally, Limlingan is the "godfather-cum-backer" of Bertie Lim to his CAB post.

God forbid Mrs. President, but are you aware that Limlingan is the same former CAB official who was charged by the Ombudsman in 1998 of grave misconduct, and that he was barred for life from holding any public office?

Honestly, we shall be forced to withdraw even our maintaining balance of support to your government, if such persons remain seated in offices directly pay rolled by us, taxpayers. Common sense dictates these personalities have no room in government service. Instead, they should be served the severest penalty of the law for readily giving away to foreign interest the country's strategic concerns, including the sovereign control of our skies, while disguising themselves as Philippine government officials.

KPMP
Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Mangagawang Pilipino

NLU National Labor Union	NAFLU National Federation of Labor Unions	ADLO Association of Democratic Labor Organizations	AMO Alyansa ng Malayang Obrebro	PALEA Philippine Airlines Employees Association
AIWA Automotive Industry Workers Alliance	SIGLO Solidarity of Independent General Labor Organizations		CFW Confederation of Filipino Workers	PCE Philippine Congress of Employees
DALO-Visayas Democratic Association of Labor Organizations	MMWF-Mindanao Mount Matutum Workers Federation		ADFLO Association of Democratic and Free Labor Organizations	KAAKBAY Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan

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RECYCLING JOSELLE BADILLA, PDI MINDANAO BUREAU
A vagrant makes a living by making a basket from used plastic scrap cords.

Comelec regional offices still clueless on automated polls

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Don't worry. Like the rest of the country, many of the Commission on Elections employees are clueless on the automated counting and canvassing project (ACCP).

Armando Velasco, Comelec director in Cordillera, said he and the other regional directors would take up the ACCP in Manila on Jan. 17, less than four months before the May elections.

He said they would discuss making ACCP available nationwide instead of a few selected cities. Only then would they be given a workshop about poll computerization, he said.

After the top level training, other Comelec employees would also be given training on the ACCP, he said. As of now, Comelec Cordillera has a copy of the Comelec's presentation on the ACCP for its perusal.

But Velasco said poll computerization is badly needed to stop possible fraud and delay. Even in highly urbanized cities like Baguio, the delay in the results is frustrating, he said.

During the 2001 elections in Baguio, it took Comelec three days to finish the counting. As a result, candidates filed five cases of fraud against the eventual winners in the mayoral and council races.

Former Comelec Chair Christian Monsod said the decision to make poll automation nationwide or selective is taking too long.

"Time is running out on that decision," he said. "What is the Comelec's critical time table? How will it handle the worst-case scenarios—delays in implementation, a national automation with mechanical failures and systems breakdown?"

He also said the software for the ACCP is still to be completed.

Augusto Lagman, chair of the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines and a critic of how Comelec is handling the poll automation, said the less the people know about ACCP, the better for those who planned to cheat in the May elections.

Lagman said he was in favor of making public the computer code of the still-to-be-completed software for the ACCP instead of making it secret.

According to the Comelec, the Verisign 128-bit digital certificate and 168-bit 3DES encryption needs trillions of computer hours to crack the code.

"But we cannot discount an inside job as very few of us know (about the ACCP)," Lagman said. He said another way that the ACCP can be hacked is with the Comelec plan to have a "proxy PC (personal computer)" to run in parallel with the counting machine bought by the Comelec.

"We should ensure that the counting machine is isolated to ensure the integrity and cleanliness of the process. Do not allow proxy PCs," Lagman said.

By "isolated," it meant that the PC should stand alone and not linked to other computers while it is counting, he said.

Under the law (Republic Act 8436) mandating the modernization of elections, the results in the municipal and city levels would be printed and the CD-ROM brought physically to the municipal or city board of canvassers.

The problem is that Comelec would only deploy 1,991 units of counting machines nationwide or one per city or municipality.

Velasco said the counting machine can read only 40 ballots per minute and for Baguio, which now has more than 150,000 registered voters, the counting will still take time.

Comelec suggested highly-urbanized cities to buy more counting machines, valued at P500,000 each, but Baguio Mayor Bernardo Vergara promptly turned down the offer for lack of funds.

The counting machine does not need keyboard or other input devices.

According to Velasco, the machine can also use generators and batteries.

The Comelec plans to deploy generators and batteries in using this machine as preparation for cases of brownout or for the places that have no access to electricity, he said.

Velasco said voters would not have difficulty in voting since the procedures are the same as the manual voting. He said the only difference is on the counting.

He said the counting machine would not affect the voting procedure. *With a report from Aisa Santos, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Child detainees seek alternatives to jail for kids

OLONGAPO CITY—At least 100 children detained for various offenses asked the Department of Justice last week to turnover children detainees to the custody of social workers or community elders instead of jailing them.

The children appealed to acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez to enforce Section 8 of the Child and Youth Welfare Act. The section states that children, upon arrest, should be turned over to the custody of social workers or responsible community members.

Officials of the Coalition to Stop Child Detention Through Restorative Justice and the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (Preda) Foundation accompanied the children to the DOJ in Manila.

The coalition is composed of 25 organizations in the country while the Preda Foundation helps children recover from abuse and sexual exploitation.

The groups asked Gutierrez to issue a circular asking prosecutors to send children aged 10 to 14 to the custody of their parents and legal guardians. They also asked the DOJ to turnover offenders, aged 15 and above, to the care of the Department of Social Welfare and Development during inquest proceedings.

"Virtually all children prisoners, including street urchins and child laborers, those with mental disabilities and prostituted girls, were arrested without a warrant," Perfecto Caparas II, coalition convenor, said in a statement.

The group also asked the DOJ to release children charged with "victimless crimes" like vagrancy, solvent abuse or illegal gambling to the custody of their relatives or charitable institutions.

It urged the DOJ to adopt a "humane, child-sensitive and human rights-oriented alternatives to child detention pursuant to the principles of restorative justice."

Records from the Public Attorney's Office in 2002 showed that 36 children were detained everyday. The PAO handled 13,300 cases involving children accused of crimes in 2002.

"We are deeply concerned over this continuing human rights violation perpetrated against our voiceless children, especially in light of the fact that the turn of the century witnessed the growing number of children in conflict with the law," said Fr. Shay Cullen, Preda founder.

Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Family of 3 killed in Laguna mishap

SINILOAN, Laguna—A family of four including a pregnant wife and her unborn baby were killed in a vehicular smash-up here last weekend.

Police identified the fatalities as Roderick M. Panuntan, 29, a mechanic; Ronelda S. Panuntan, 25, pregnant; and Princes S. Panuntan, 7, all of Tondo, Manila.

The driver suspect involved in the fatal accident was identified as Divino R. Lualhati, 27, of Antipolo City and Sampaloc, Manila.

Police said that at about 10:30 a.m. last Jan. 4, Roderick Panuntan was driving his motorbike bound for Pangil with his 5-month pregnant wife Ronelda as backrider together with daughter Princes at Highway Sitio Tulay Kalabaw, Barangay Halayhayin, Siniloan when they were bumped from behind by a speeding Isuzu jeepney driven by Lualhati.

The strong impact caused by the jeepney dragged the motorbike and its occupants to as far as 13 meters away from the point of engagement. Roderick died instantly while his wife Ronelda, and daughter Princes succumbed at the General Cailles Memorial District Hospital in Pakil. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Bet seeks late dad's post

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current Taguig-Pateros congressman, and Ren-Ren, who sits in the Muntinlupa City council—big sister Pia chose to make her election debut on the national stage right away.

For that bold move, the young although not really obscure newcomer expectedly drew questions doubting her mettle and maturity. What, after all, has Pia got apart from a surname voters can recall, thanks largely to her father's legal advice-cum-drama programs on radio and TV?

When the INQUIRER met her on Jan. 7, Cayetano snapped back at skeptics: "They say I lack political experience? But I'm actually proud of it. Isn't that what some sectors of our society are saying—that they are so tired of *trapos* (traditional politicians)?"

"They (critics) can look at my professional and academic background. Being a lawyer, I know what it takes to make a law, the research involved. And so the question is: 'Do I have the heart?'" she said.

Legacy

"I have a thriving business and a [charity] foundation. My life is actually complete and people are saying I don't need [to enter politics]. There's no reason for me to do it unless I have pure intentions to help the people."

Cayetano added: "It would be an honor for me to continue Dad's legacy, particularly his fight for justice."

On a more pragmatic level, she said her "goal, of course, is to corner the same [number of] votes" that catapulted the elder Cayetano to the upper slots of the Senate race's Magic 12.

Toward that target, she did what is expected of any dutiful politician's daughter: She has adopted—and made feminine—her old man's ballot-tested moniker in her campaign materials. She's now "Compañera ng Bayan."

A mother of two young girls, Pia is married to a fellow lawyer, Butch Sebastian. Before anyone could sneer at her, Cayetano maintained that "I never dropped my husband's surname just because of the elections—for in truth I had very rarely used it."

She explained she was merely exercising the "option allowed by law" for women not to use their husband's last name. Hence, even after marrying Sebastian in 1994, she is still a Cayetano in her passport and driver's license, among other documents.

Noli support

Largely owing to her father's media ties, she said, broadcaster-turned-senator Noli de Castro, now President Macapagal's running mate, became her strongest endorser during "negotiations" over the composition of the K-4 lineup.

But she has never run for public office before, so why aim for the Senate at once and not test the waters at a lower, local post?

"Being a mayor, for example, is more of an administrative job," she replied. "But as a lawyer, I believe I'm more equipped for making laws, and I also want my efforts to have a bigger, national impact."

While her father had been urging her to run for public office since she was 21 years old, it was brother Allan, now seeking reelection as Taguig-Pateros representative, who thought that this time might be finally right for her.

According to a two-page resumé she has prepared for the campaign, Cayetano earned her Economics and Law degrees at the University of the Philippines. Before enrolling in Law, however, she spent two years in the United States, working with investment bankers.

A consistent honor student, she ranked No. 7 in her Law class when she graduated in 1991. She later served as legal counsel for Philweb Corp. and Belle Corp. She started out with the Castillo Laman Tan Pantaleon and San Jose Law Offices, specializing in corporate and intellectual property law.

In 2001, she put up the Maxi Group of Companies, a distributor of baby care supplies and educational toys. The company, of which she is currently the president, currently runs 10 retail outlets.

Co-host

Her earliest national exposure was in 1998 when she acted as her father's co-host occasionally on his ABS-CBN legal drama show. Shortly after the elder Cayetano died last year, Pia took his place as free legal adviser on a nightly dzMM radio program. She also resumed his father's legal advice columns in a tabloid.

Her own civic involvement outside her father's projects had little to do with lawyering but was inspired by her earlier tragic experience as a mother.

In 2001, she founded the Gabriel Symphony Foundation Inc., in memory of her 9-month-old son and third child who died of a rare chromosomal disease. The foundation has focused on helping children with cleft lips, hearing impairment, and other special medical needs.

"That's what my father didn't have, being a mother," said Cayetano, who went into the publication of parenting newsletters and books.

Mothers

Asked what particular sector she would expect to give her massive support in the polls, she said it would be the women's sector, particularly mothers, "because they can relate to me."

If elected, she said "my personal experience as a mother would come into play" as she would push for legislation on child welfare and education, women's rights, senior citizens, and public health workers.

An active sportswoman and outdoors enthusiast, Cayetano said, "I would rather do fun-runs or go biking with kids" for her so-called campaign gimmicks.

This was when the slim, 5'8" runner, cyclist, and one-time national volleyball player was asked if she's willing to sing or dance on stage just to attract crowds.

But in the same breath, her untested political skills got into work—for suddenly a compromise was arranged: "I'm not out there to provide entertainment, but it doesn't mean I'm not willing to make *pakisama*. If you caught me singing or dancing, that means I have already trained enough to give a decent performance," she said as she laughed.

Senators hold caucus ...

From page A1

cates of candidacy of those running in the May 10 election to Jan. 5 in order to have enough time to print ballots to be used in the automated elections.

Normally, the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy of national candidates is 90 days before an election.

Drilon said there may be no time to revise the ballots needed to accommodate Con-con delegates.

Poe, too

Even opposition presidential candidate and movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. was for Charter change, one of his candidates for senator said yesterday.

Amina Rasul-Bernardo said Poe, in particular, was for the shift from the current presidential to a federal and parliamentary system of government.

Rasul and Rep. Didagen Dilangalen (Maguindanao) are two Muslim candidates on the Senate slate of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

"The fact that FPJ got two Muslims in his Senate slate is proof that he is serious with federalism," Rasul said in an interview over the weekend.

Rasul said Poe was "looking seriously at federalism which is basically equitable representation as far as Muslims are concerned."

"If he's open to federalism, it follows that he also wants a parliamentary shift," she said. "These all open up the issue of constitutional reform."

Rasul noted that even Poe's wife, actress Susan Roces, agreed that "we Muslims have been given a raw deal."

Rasul said that according to Poe's view, the decades-long problem in Mindanao was rooted in what she described as "discrimination."

"The discrimination against Muslims is affecting efforts at national unification," Rasul said.

She said she had yet to hear Poe's views on how to deal with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front but emphasized that the actor was "sincere" in solving the secessionist problem.

"He (Poe) can govern," Rasul said. "As I've said, he got two Muslims for his Senate slate."

She said Poe had had extensive discussions regarding federalism with reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who also hails from Mindanao.

Congressional chorus

Congressional leaders from Ifugao to Mindanao welcomed the renewed push for Charter change.

"We are jubilant that the proposed shift to federal system and parliamentary system will now see the light of day," said Rep. Solomon Chungalao (Ifugao).

Chungalao said a lot would happen when Congress resumes session today. De Venecia is calling for the approval, between Jan. 15 and 20, of a bill providing for a constitutional convention. The bill will provide for the election of Con-con delegates in the May 10 polls.

Rep. Jose Solis (Sorsogon) said the shift to federalism would be a "big boon for the neglected outer islands and distant regions."

Mindanao Representatives Constantino Jaraula (Cagayan de Oro City), Isidro Real Jr. (Zamboanga del Sur) and Leovigildo Banaag (Agusan del Norte) said that people from the South had long clamored for federalism.

Court decision letting Estrada go to US is a joke

From page A1

which had denied a similar motion on June 5, 2002 and again on July 19 of the same year.

Why the sudden about-face? Can the present decision be justified in the light of the court's own reasoning in 2002 and on the basis of Estrada's latest acts and declarations?

The June 5, 2002 resolution denied Estrada's motion to have a "total joint replacement arthroscopic surgery on both knees" by his surgeon of choice (Mow) in the United States. Estrada invoked the patient-doctor relationship and the presumption of his innocence.

The court then itemized several practical reasons for denying the motion: (1) the medical condition of Estrada is not life-threatening; (2) there was no showing that it was only his own doctor who could perform the required operation; (3) there was no showing that the operation could only be done in the United States.

Said the court in its June 5 resolution: "There is no absolute necessity for treatment abroad, therefore, to allow the movant (Estrada) to leave the country without showing the absolute necessity thereof would be without any legal basis at all."

It also held that "the perceived risk of flight is not without basis. The records provide ample foundation for the possible disquieting spectacle. As correctly observed by the prosecution, movant does not recognize our authority to try him and our ability to try him fairly. He continues to refuse to have anything to do with his case, dismissing his de parte counsels and ignoring his de oficio ones for this purpose. Worse, he has repeatedly stated his loss of confidence in the entire judicial system. With these pronouncements, made no less than in open court, it will not be completely unexpected if the temporarily free movant decides to permanently take flight from this jurisdiction with the justification that, anyway, justice cannot be had (on) this side of the planet."

Dec. 23 resolution

Estrada's second motion filed on Nov. 4, 2003 sought an immediate knee replacement surgery as well as a surgery on his spinal column, due to his debilitating condition which may allegedly result in immediate paralysis, and again—on his alleged right to be treated by Mow in the United States.

Reproducing the testimony of a certain Doctor Calanoc, one of Estrada's doctors who stated that without timely medical intervention, the condition of Estrada will result in the paralysis of the lower extremities, the court held that it "cannot be heartless as to deprive movant his choice of surgeon and hospital this time around considering his deteriorating health which will lead to paralysis. In the light of movant's continued refusal to risk surgery here even at the cost of a painful and debilitating loss of movement, the Court is loathe to maintain the status quo and risk the grim scenario painted by (Estrada's doctor)."

In fairness to the court, it imposed several conditions to the granting of Estrada's motion: (1) A three-month period to travel, to commence within 10 days from receipt of the order up to March 31, 2004; (2) a personal undertaking to return and recognize the jurisdiction of the court; (3) a P1-million bond; (4) four PNP escorts; and (5) an undertaking to inform the court his whereabouts.

Unjustifiable

A court has the power to modify its orders in the course of a trial but it cannot do so without reason or in an arbitrary, whimsical manner. With due respect to this special division—we recall that we in Kilosbayan and Bantay Katarungan defended it publicly against the baseless assaults of Estrada himself (See e.g., Editorial of Kilosbayan and Bantay Katarungan Magazine p. 5, April 2000 Issue)—it has now gravely abused its discretion in issuing the Dec. 23, 2003 resolution. The reasons are obvious.

1. The 2003 resolution is against the parameters set by the 2002 resolution.

There is STILL no showing that the medical condition of Estrada is life-threatening.

There is STILL no showing that Estrada's doctor of choice (Mow) is the only one in the world who can perform the surgery to rehabilitate Estrada.

There is STILL no showing that the operation cannot be performed in the Philippines.

In fact, the court's resolution of 2002 stated that there are roughly fifty "qualified, experienced and competent" Filipino surgeons who could undertake the operation needed by Estrada; that the operation needed by Estrada was not unusual; and that the infection rate in some hospitals here was better than the across-the-board average in the United States.

To borrow from the test adopted by the court in its 2002 resolution, there is STILL "no absolute necessity" for the granting of Estrada's motion.

2. Estrada's claim of progressive debilitation of his medical condition is attributable to himself. Nothing could have prevented him in 2002 from remedying his condition except his adamant refusal to have himself treated here in the Philippines.

Why should the court feel for someone who does not want to be treated here in the Philippines? Why should the court feel for someone who does not want to be treated by "qualified, experienced and competent" Filipino doctors in the most expensive hospitals in the country when the sole ground for his refusal is that he wants to be treated by an American doctor in the United States?

Estrada's refusal to be treated in the Philippines even by his own doctor, Mow, clearly indicates that he is placing greater premium on being outside the jurisdiction of the court than on his being treated.

3. The terms and conditions attached to the granting of the motion furnish no reasonable assurance that Estrada will return to the Philippines.

First, the P1-million travel bond is loose change for an accused who lives like a billionaire.

Second, the personal undertaking to return and recognize the court's jurisdiction is preposterous as it is degrading for the court. No amount of protestation by Estrada will change the fact that the Sandiganbayan ALREADY HAS jurisdiction over him. As the eminent Justice Holmes aptly put it: Jurisdiction is based on physical power—that is, physical power over persons and things.

In allowing Estrada to leave Philippine territory, what the court has done is to relinquish actual and effective jurisdiction in lieu of a promise to recognize its jurisdiction.

Even the personal undertaking of Estrada made in supposed compliance with the condition to recognize the jurisdiction of the court is not unequivocal as he claims that he is signing the undertaking because he has no other choice except to do it, which he can later revoke at will on the premise that it was made under duress.

In fact, the lead paragraph under the banner headline on page 2 of the Dec. 31, 2003 issue of the INQUIRER says it all: "Jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada yesterday claimed he was 'under duress' when he gave a 'personal undertaking' that he was submitting himself to the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court trying him with plunder and graft charges."

Third, the four PNP escorts amount to no more than just that—escorts. In the United States, the PNP escorts will be treated as foreign nationals with no authority to enforce Philippine laws.

Thus, even if Estrada decides to extend his stay in the United States, his PNP escorts cannot handcuff him and drag him back to the Philippines.

The only apparent recourse for the Philippines—ironically after it shall have lost effective jurisdiction over Estrada—would be to beg the United States to please extradite him so Philippine courts could assert jurisdiction over him again.

Unfortunately, the US-RP extradition treaty does not cover offenses when the law provides for the death penalty. Since 1995, plunder has been considered a heinous offense punishable by death.

In the meantime, Estrada has been busy trying to modify the Dec. 23 resolution of the Sandiganbayan and, in the process, has been eroding the credibility of the anti-graft court, thereby making the special division look ridiculous and pathetic.

Contrary to Estrada's urgent motion of Nov. 3, 2003 which underlined the need for immediate surgery, since his alleged condition would lead to immediate paralysis, Estrada said, shortly after the Dec. 23, 2003 resolution, that there was no urgency for him to go to the United States after all since his surgery has been postponed to February 2004.

A little later, he said he could not afford the $1.25-million fee that Mow was asking from him. Then on Jan. 8, Estrada said he had decided to stay in the Philippines to help presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., his bosom friend, and would leave only after the May 10 elections!

As we stated in the presence of President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Kilosbayan Forum in UP Diliman on Jan. 9: "The Sandiganbayan order allowing Estrada to travel to the United States is not only unjustifiable; Estrada has trivialized the dignity of the court and made fun of it—*Ginawang laruan lamang ni Erap ang Special Division ng Sandiganbayan.*"

On the same day, special division spokesperson Renato Bocar reportedly said: "Estrada's change of mind on his surgery abroad merits an explanation to the court on whether he is really serious in his request. There is a risk involved in what he (Estrada) is doing, because now there is a doubt in the mind of the court as to the reasons he advanced in his request." (Saturday, Jan. 10, 2004.)

The court's spokesperson might have placed the greater part of the blame on Malacañang for prodding the special division to grant Estrada's request since last Dec. 16 when Poe declared that he would run for president.

Special division

But beyond the inexplicable bases for the resolution of the Sandiganbayan special division is the unimpeachable information that the special division was constituted in violation of the Rules of Procedure of the Sandiganbayan.

This gives credence to the generally held belief that the resolution was politically motivated, following a stream of Malacañang pronouncements in favor of "total reconciliation," even with prominent personalities having pending cases before courts of justice.

Shortly after the Dec. 23 resolution, the banner headline in the dailies proudly stated—"Palace offers to help Erap obtain US visa" (Dec. 26, 2003).

Rule XIII, 1(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Sandiganbayan provides that in cases where no unanimous vote of the three members of a division is obtained, a special division of five should be constituted with the two members being designated by raffle on a rotation basis.

Apparently, the voting in the deliberation conducted last Dec. 18 resulted in Justices Chico-Nazario and Leonardo-de Castro going in favor of the motion and Justice Sandoval dissenting from the majority. As no unanimous vote was had, this should have resulted in a raffle to determine the two special members of the division.

However, Bantay Katarungan has found out that, instead of a raffle as provided for in the rules, the two special members—Justices Diosdado M. Peralta and Norbert Y. Geraldez Sr.—were merely handpicked by the presiding justice.

This violation of the rules makes the constitution of the special division defective and its resolution.

Moreover, Bantay Katarungan also found out that the members of the special division never conducted a deliberation to resolve the motion as the justices were simply asked to sign for or against the motion. This being the case, the resolution suffers from a second fatal defect, that of not having been the result of collegiality in decision-making.

The divisions in the Sandiganbayan are termed collegial repeatedly under its own rules not because they are composed of more than one member but because decisions are arrived at after an exchange of views and deliberation between and among the members.

As stated by one authority on the US Supreme Court, collegiality does not mandate unanimity but demands loyalty to the institution, civil treatment of colleagues and freedom from external influence (Oxford Companion to the US Supreme Court, 1992 p.165).

What is more curious, however, is why the raffle was dispensed with on Dec. 22, precisely to ensure that the majority vote in favor of Estrada's travel would be maintained in the five-member division on Dec. 23, 2003.

In light of the circumstances of their appointment and on the basis of their previous conduct and performance, the two additional justices—Diosdado M. Peralta and Norberto Y. Geraldez Sr.—are perceived and known in the Sandiganbayan to be persuadable—*madaling pakiusapan*. We shall explain this in greater detail should his case reach the Supreme Court.

This violation of the rules of the Sandiganbayan is a serious matter which goes right into the validity of the Dec. 23 resolution of the special division. This incident is not simply a case of a misapplication of the rules and an indication of the loss of independence of the anti-graft court but it is a deliberate and systematic effort to favor a particular result.

We are in danger of forgetting that the plunder case and the creation of the special division—whose three members we had commended again and again for their independence, moral courage and competence—became possible only because the people, in the exercise of their sovereign powers, decided they have had enough with an incompetent, corrupt, and a morally bankrupt administration.

It should be remembered that the plunder case against Estrada (described as "the trial of the century") is a symbolic one as it represents the continuing struggle of the nation to uphold the single most important value that Filipinos stood for in Edsa I and II—the idea of public accountability.

Death convict still hoping he will live

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

HIS SCHEDULED execution is less than three weeks away, but in death convict Roberto Lara's heart, the hope that his life will be spared remains.

This is according to Fr. Roberto Olaguer, parish priest of Ina ng Awa Church and chaplain of the New Bilibid Prisons.

"(Lara) remains optimistic his execution will not push through," Olaguer, who makes daily rounds to the cells of convicts on death row, told the INQUIRER during an interview on Saturday at the New Bilibid Prisons.

Jan. 30 schedule

Lara and his co-accused, Roderick Licayan, are scheduled for execution on Jan. 30. They would be the first to go since President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the moratorium on the death penalty for kidnapping convicts.

The two and several others were sentenced to death by the Marikina Regional Trial Court on Sept. 9, 1999, for the kidnapping of a Chinese businessman and his assistant on Aug. 10, 1998. The Supreme Court later affirmed the sentence.

Innocent

But Lara and Licayan say they are innocent.

In his five years in jail, Lara kept on telling Olaguer that it was his uncle, Pedrito Mabansag, who masterminded the kidnapping.

"I just ignored him before. But then I decided to verify with the Marikina Regional Trial Court if indeed an arrest warrant had been issued against Mabansag," Olaguer said in Filipino.

A few days ago, the priest managed to get a copy of the warrant, and on Jan. 8, Olaguer flew to Negros Occidental not only to hand down Lara's letter to his mother but also to look for Mabansag.

Cleared

About 9 p.m. Jan. 9, the provincial police and the Region VI Mobile Group arrested Mabansag in his friend's house in Escalante, Negros Occidental.

In his interviews, Mabansag cleared his nephew, Lara, of any participation in the kidnapping.

"Umaasa rin ako na hindi siya mabibitay (I am also hoping that he would not be executed)," Olaguer said.

The other day, Lara's mother, Benilda, 62, arrived at the New Bilibid Prisons. She told the INQUIRER that she was ready to kneel and beg for Ms Macapagal's mercy just to save her son.

Mercy

She added she was willing to trade places with her son, saying that he was too young to die. Lara has two kids, an 8-year-old boy and a 6-year-old girl. His wife had long left him, Benilda added.

The mother said Lara was a "good and industrious son."

He used to be a farmer in Talisay, Negros Occidental. In 1997, he went to Metro Manila and became a construction worker.

In 1998, Lara was arrested.

In jail, Lara continued working, this time as a laundryman for the wealthy inmates.

Filmfest breaks record

Nine entries gross ₱329M in 15 days

THE MMDA maintains that the iron railings, concrete barriers and lane dividers on Edsa and other roads are safe. Such dividers as these in front of the SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City, separate the vehicles coming out of the Edsa-Crossing underpass and those from the Edsa-Crossing intersection

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

THE RECENTLY concluded Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines grossed P328.8 million and set a new earnings record in its 29-year history.

But the producers of some of the nine entries are not happy.

Caloocan City mayor and festival selection committee head Rey Malonzo told the INQUIRER yesterday that because the revenues were almost equally distributed to the entries, the earnings of some of the big-budget movies came short of their producer's expectations.

This is unlike last year, when revenues were concentrated on the four top-grossing films.

Very successful

Despite this, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando remains happy about the festival, which he described as "very successful."

He said this year's gross was about P13 million more than last year's P314.7 million.

The nine entries during the 2002 MMFF earned a combined P314.7 million for 17 days. Malonzo said the figures released as of press time for the total gross of the entries for the 2003 MMFF were based on the festival's 15-day run.

The festival began when seven of the nine entries were shown on Dec. 25, 2003. The remaining two films were shown on Jan. 1. The festival ended on Thursday.

Top-grosser Captain Barbell, which stars senatorial candidate Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., earned P60 million. Fantastikman, top-billed by Vic Sotto, followed with P55 million.

Revenue

Festival best picture Crying Ladies, starring Sharon Cuneta, earned P49 million, while Mano Po II earned P47 million.

Fernando added that aside from generating revenue for local government units in terms of amusement tax, the festival also helped encouraged producers to come up with quality movies.

Proceeds of the filmfest will go to the Movie Workers' Welfare Foundation (Mowelfund), the Video Regulatory Board and the Film Academy of the Philippines.

Something strange? Run!

IF YOU see suspicious-looking persons in the parking area, stay in your car or come back later. Better yet, call the guards or the police.

The authorities aired this warning yesterday after five men hog tied Merla Ariga, 37, and robbed her of close to P200,000 in cash, jewelry and other belongings inside her condominium unit in Mandaluyong City Friday night.

Ariga said the men pretended to be visitors at the Cityland Tower on Shaw Boulevard.

Two of the suspects got into the elevator with her then dragged her to her room.

Luige del Puerto

Lane dividers can never be safer—MMDA

By Margaux Ortiz

THE IRON railings and other lane separators on highways and U-turn slots should not be cause for concern, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority insisted.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said these should not be blamed for the death of Christopher James Tuason, the nephew of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo who died after running into railings near the Magallanes MRT station Tuesday morning.

Vergel de Dios said witnesses saw Tuason's car come from McKinley Road moments before the crash.

According to him, the Ford Lynx was turning right on Edsa but the driver apparently changed his mind at the last minute.

The car made an abrupt stop then made a sharp left, crossing the intersection of Edsa-Ayala and then speeding toward Magallanes, where he hit a 20-foot separator.

Vergel de Dios stressed that the safety horses or lane separators were as safe as the iron railings because "these are hollow and collapsible."

"The impact of the crash, not the safety separators and railings, caused his death," the MMDA official said.

Vergel de Diyos added, "If they (people) want, we can put foam on the iron railings but these would not make the barriers any more safer."

Last week, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay sought the removal of the street barriers.

METROBRIEFS

The ring is key

THE RING that Allan de Leon, 38, was wearing gave him away and led to his arrest for the murder of Lucrecia Gaza, 74, on Friday night, in Malabon City. The ring belonged to Gaza. De Leon of Manapat Street and two others identified as one alias Toto and a certain Ronaldo Jimenez reportedly entered the house of Gaza Friday night and killed the old woman during a robbery. Gaza was stabbed in her neck. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Crooks slay hero

ANTONIO Pica, 37, a truck driver from Road 10, Tondo, Manila, died on Saturday afternoon as he attempted to help two women being robbed by unidentified men. The suspects, said a report of SPO2 Athos de Quiros of the Western Police District Homicide Section, shot the victim in his upper left chest and right arm. This after Pica, a Leyte native, tried to stop the three men as they seized the belongings of the victims on board a taxi cab at 2:45 p.m. Saturday. *Tarra Quismundo*

Fatal gunplay

IF PLAYING with matches is dangerous, how much more with guns? Nineteen-year-old Noel Lim, of Jose Abad Santos Street, Tondo, Manila, died of a bullet in the chest as he reportedly played with a gun on an alley near Luningning Street in Tondo. He and his friends were reportedly having a drinking session when Lim allegedly drew a handgun of unknown caliber and showed it to his friends. A shot rang out and his friends saw Lim bleeding in the chest. *Tarra Quismundo*

Cyber shop rob

ANOTHER Internet and computer games shop was robbed of nearly P100,000 worth of computer wares the other day in Navotas. Poll Strike Internet and games shop became the third store to be robbed of computer wares in two weeks. Arnold Pablo, 23, of Sipac, Navotas, discovered the robbery Saturday about 9:30 a.m. as he went to open shop. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Citizenship issue hounds Manila reelectionist solon

By Tarra Quismundo

THE CANDIDACY of an incumbent Manila Rep. Harry Angpin is being threatened by a petition before the Commission on Elections questioning his citizenship.

Angping is being challenged to prove his Filipino citizenship or face disqualification in May.

A statement from the Manila City Hall said barangay chair Alejandro Gomez of Binondo's Barangay 387, Zone 39, filed a petition before the Comelec on Jan. 6, asking that Angping be barred from running in the elections.

Gomez said Angping was a holder of an Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) that was issued on Oct. 1, 1952, 10 months after he was born.

The statement said further that the document was certified as true copies on July 10, 1998, and Dec. 23, last year, by the Bureau of Immigration (BI).

And as Angping celebrates his 52nd birthday today, he will be filing his reply to the petition filed before the Comelec National Capital Region.

"This is an old issue, garbage. This is political harassment... nothing new," Angping told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Angping said the same petition was filed against him when he first ran as representative in 1998, but such petition was dismissed.

"I am a natural born Filipino citizen. In 1994, the court granted my petition for the correction of my citizenship on my birth certificate," Angping explained.

He did not deny that he had an ACR until 1966, when he was 14. But when he turned 15, he said that his citizenship was corrected.

Saying that the ACR has to be renewed every year, Angping said that if he had been an alien and had not applied for an ACR since 1966, he would have been an overstaying alien and should have been deported by the BI.

But, he reiterated, he is a Filipino.

"I have been a bearer of a Philippine passport for 20 years. Could the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) have been so careless as to give me a passport if I were an illegal alien?" Angping said.

Calling the issue a "handiwork" of his political opponents, Angping said he was confident that the petition would be dismissed like the previous one.

Angping has served two terms as Binondo representative, and is seeking his last term in May.

He will be up against incumbent 3rd District Councilor Miles Roces, son-in-law of Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr., who is running for Congress for the first time.

SUERTRES (2) (3) (4) (In exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 (18) (19) (25) (26) (30) (45)

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METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Payatas kids cheer up 'Peace' elder

By Volt Contreras

SHIZUKO Mutoh, 94, said she found in the dumpsite community of Payatas, Quezon City, a source of joy that old people in her homeland woefully miss: the company of children.

"We now have very few young people back home," the Japanese elder told the INQUIRER through an interpreter, as kids from around the impoverished neighborhood gathered around and learned how she turned a torn page of a magazine into an origami "crane."

In a way, Mutoh was unwittingly fulfilling her task as one of the 800 passengers of the Tokyo-based "Peace Boat," which for the last 20 years has turned ordinary Japanese citizens into agents of cultural exchange or witnesses to the pressing issues affecting the global community.

The chartered Peace Boat vessel, MV Topaz, spent the New Year holidays docked in Manila, its first stop in a 12-country tour.

Arriving on Jan. 1, the passengers were divided into smaller groups and were led to various "exposure" trips arranged by its Philippine host, People's Global Exchange (PGE), a nongovernment organization.

One group visited Payatas, another met with World War II "comfort women" in Tarlac, while others toured the Navotas fishport and met with former Filipino contract workers in Japan.

It's now the eighth time that the Peace Boat has visited the Philippines, said PGE coordinator Luzviminda Santos.

SHIZU finds bundle of joy with Payatas kids. RUDY ESPERAS

The group which visited Payatas donated computers, a piano-organ and wheelchairs to the local Ina ng Lupang Pangako Parish and partner NGOs, Santos added.

"We don't really come to a country to meet its government (regarding issues). We go to the actual communities," explained Peace Boat staff member Mine Karaki, who accompanied Mutoh on a house-to-house trip.

And while Peace Boat people are out to learn more about social problems around the world, she said, "we don't ask questions because we're here more to form bonds. There isn't much we can do directly, but we take that first step, which is to become aware."

Asked what would be the Peace Boat's message to Filipina comfort women who were turned into sex slaves by the Japanese military during WWII, Karaki said: "That we are eager to learn from their stories, that they are not forgotten."

In fact, the Japanese experience during and after the war had much to do with the founding of Peace Boat by a group of Japanese college students in 1983, Karaki explained.

The founders, she said, launched the Peace Boat in response to the way post-war history books in Japan either omitted or coated in "suitable" language the "horrible things" committed by its military in the then occupied countries.

Instead of writing "invaded," for example, some books simply say Japanese forces "went into" a particular country, Karaki said, adding: "The really bad things (wartime atrocities) were either justified or said in a way that lessened their gravity."

The Peace Boat cruise, which goes around the world three times a year and charges around $13,000 per passenger, is now aimed at helping the Japanese people "learn the truth" about what's happening in other countries, she added.

But apart from this advocacy, she admitted that the cheap rates offered by the cruise and the chance to see places that are not exactly considered tourist destinations have been attracting passengers.

From Manila, the Peace Boat was scheduled to visit Singapore, India, Kenya, South Africa, Namibia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Tahiti and Hawaii.

North rail project starts soon

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

HERE'S one thing to watch out for in 2004.

The North Rail Project, which aims to connect Caloocan City and San Fernando City, La Union, is expected to formally begin in the second quarter of this year.

Last Dec. 30, the North Luzon Railways Corporation signed a supply-contract agreement with China National Machinery and Equipment Corporation, the company chosen to construct the first section of the project's Phase I.

The project's Phase I will be from Caloocan City to the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark Field, Pampanga. The first phase is divided into two sections, the first being the 32-kilometer segment from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan.

But while the agreement with the construction company has been signed, the soft-loan to finance the project is still to be approved.

The $400 million-loan will come from the China EximBank and will be payable in 20 years, according to North rail director Jerry Pelayo.

Gina Jota, project manager, added that they were hoping the loan would be approved within this month.

Should the loan be approved as they hoped, the construction of the rails from Caloocan City to Malolos will start in May.

Pelayo said the first phase would be completed in three years.

But while the project officials say the North rail would improve the economy by boosting Clark Air Field and Subic Naval bases as economic zones and hasten the transfer of products and commuters from Northern Luzon to Metro Manila, residents who would be displaced by the project see it as a threat.

Until now, no systematic relocation plans have been drawn up for the 17,500 families who would be displaced.

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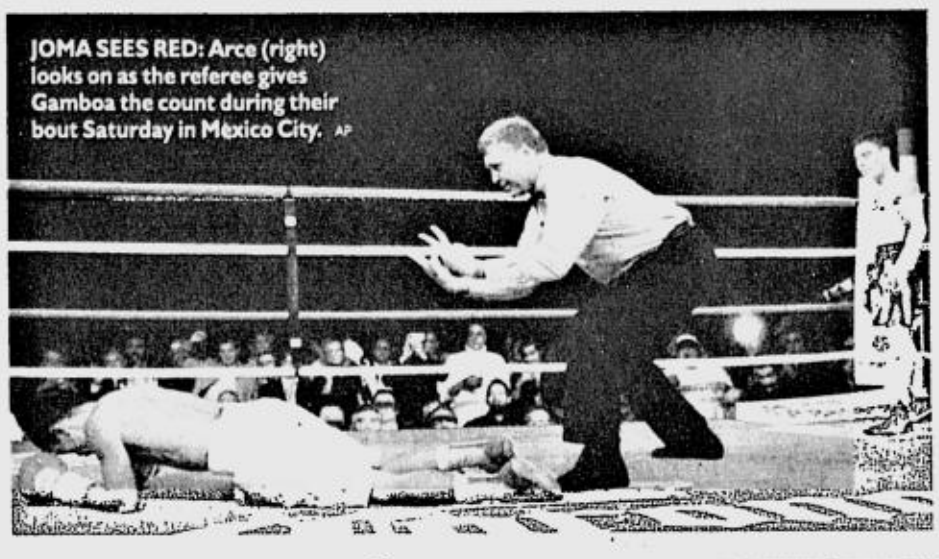
JOMA SEES RED: Arce (right) looks on as the referee gives Gamboa the count during their bout Saturday in Mexico City. AP

Pagulayan repeats over Bata

ALEX Pagulayan downed Efren "Bata" Reyes, 11-3, yesterday to join seven other players in the winner's bracket of the 2nd Annual US Professional Pool Players Association (UPPA) Pro Tour Championships at the Bicycle Casino in Bell Gardens in Los Angeles, California.

The full-blooded 25-year-old Filipino playing out of Canada thus proved his victory over Reyes in the finals of last year's Tokyo 9-ball championships was no fluke.

Pagulayan, who promises to represent the Philippines if he can get a "dual citizenship" visa, next faces Nick Varner, conqueror of fellow American Danny Harriman.

PAGULAYAN

California-based Filipino Santos Sambajon bowed to four-time world champion Johnny Archer, 8-11, to join Reyes in the losers' bracket.

The 35-year-old Archer, who beat Francisco "Django" Bustamante in the finals of the Battle of Champions here last year, booted out another Filipino, Edgar Acaba, 11-9, in the first round.

Archer's next foe is Sweden's Marcus Chamat, 11-3 winner over 1996 US Open champ Rodney Morris.

Germany's Ralf Souquet trounced Charlie Williams, 11-7, to set up a match with Mexico's Ernesto Dominguez, who ousted Tony Robles, 11-6.

In another result, 2001 World Pool Cardiff champ Mika Immonen of Finland clobbered Max Eberle.

Immonen is slated to meet Filipino pool legend Jose "Amang" Parica in the next round. *Marlon Bernardino*

WBC king Arce too tough for Gamboa

RP fighter TKO'd in 2nd

By Salven L. Lagumbay

RETIREMENT beckons for former champ Joma Gamboa after he was stopped in the second round yesterday by World Boxing Council junior flyweight king Jorge "Travieso" Arce in their scheduled 12-rounder at the Hipodromo De las Americas Banamex in Mexico City, Mexico.

Arce rained punches from all angles on Gamboa, who failed to match the Mexican's impressive power right at the opening bell.

It was Gamboa's second aborted attempt at the WBC 108-lb crown, having failed against champion Saman Sorjaturong of Thailand on April 27, 1996.

Gamboa, the former World Boxing Association minimumweight titlist, saw his record dip to 33-8-2 (22 KOs), while the talented Arce, who earlier announced he would soon abdicate the crown to campaign in the heavier flyweight class, raised his slate to 35-3-1 (26 KOs).

The win also improves the Los Mochis, Mexico native Arce's ledger against Filipino boxers to four wins against no loss. He had beaten Juanito Rubillar, Carmelo Caceres and Jovan Presbitero in previous fights.

"It's sad but I expected it. Joma should retire now," said sportsman Tony Aldeguer, Gamboa's benefactor while the latter was still fighting for the ALA Gym in Cebu.

In the undercard, cruiserweight Jorge Kahwagi (10-0) bucked two first-round knockdowns to stop 42-year-old Dwayne Swift (46-30), super bantam Antonio Meza prevailed via a third round KO over Julio César Cardona and flyweight Alejandro Hernández put away Carlos Valdivia in the sixth.

Abadia forges semis showdown with Arcilla

MARAWI CITY—Third seed Adelo Abadia struggled past unseeded Danilo Sajonia, 7-5, 7-6 (3), yesterday to reach the semifinals of the P200,000 first Gov. Mamintal "Mike" Adiong Cup National Open at the Mindanao State University Tennis Center here.

Abadia's next opponent will be top seed Johnny Arcilla, who scored a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Michael Mora III.

Playing in the other semifinal match of the tourney organized by Lanao del Sur provincial administrator Mamintal Al. Adiong with support from Dunlop Philippines will be No. 2 Joseph Victorino, a 7-5, 6-0 winner over No. 6 Pop Sabandon, and No. 4 Rolando Ruel Jr., who downed No. 7 Ricardo Lagac, 6-2, 6-1.

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East Timor fighters make it to Asian ringfest

By Roy Luarca

THEY didn't send word that they're coming, so East Timorese delegates caught organizers of the 22nd Asian Boxing qualifying by surprise when they arrived at the Puerto Princesa City airport yesterday.

Due to their unexpected arrival, the drawing of lots was moved for today, with action also commencing tonight at the Puerto Princesa City Coliseum.

War-ravaged East Timor thus became the 30th country in the tournament serving as a qualifier for this year's Athens Olympics. East Timor is competing in only its second international sporting event after seeing action in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games last December.

"We really made extra effort to invite countries previously hit by conflicts. We wanted to make this event also a forum for understanding and cooperation on top of sporting excellence," said Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines.

Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes and Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn, who are serving as co-chair of the event, said everything is in place for the staging of the weeklong meet.

"The number of participating countries is proof that the Puerto Princesa City qualifying is a big success. We're ready," said Reyes and Hagedorn.

SEA Games and 1st Afro-Asian Games light flyweight champion Harry Tañamor and 2000 Sydney Olympian Arlan Lerio lead the nine-man Philippine team vying for slots to Athens.

The other Filipino bets are flyweight Violito Payla, featherweight Junard Ladon, lightweight Florencio Ferrer, light welter Mark Jason Melligen, welter Francis Joven, Fil-Am middleweight Christopher Camat and light heavyweight Maraon Goles.

A total of 212 boxers from 30 countries, including war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, are vying in the event being sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Accel, Revicon and Pacific Heights.

Lerio, who saw action in the Sydney Games as a flyweight, steps on to the ring as a bantamweight this time.

Focus will be on Tañamor, who has dished out superb performances in recent competitions. He brought home silver medals from the Busan Asian Games and the BoxAm in Sevilla, Spain, and golds from the Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad, India, and the SEAG in Ho Chi Minh.

Tañamor arrived with his teammates in this port city on Thursday, a day ahead of powerhouses Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Asia bagged four of the 12 gold medals in the Sydney Games and the region's boxing officials are hoping to bring home more from Athens, with the Philippines as a possible contributor.

"Hindi basta-basta ang event *na ito.* The best of Asia are here but we will give them a good fight and we are hoping to take as many slots (to Athens as) possible. *Sa susunod,* hopefully, *hindi lang sila* (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Thailand) *ang Asyanong mag-uuwi ng* gold. *Tayo rin,*" said Lopez.

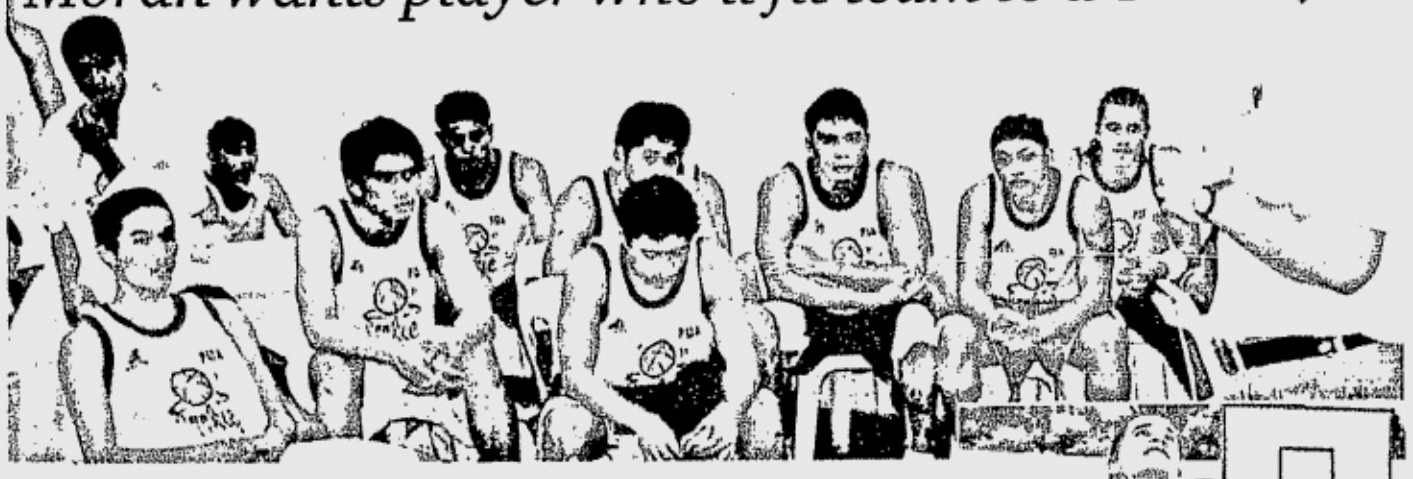
The most number of slots Filipinos had filled in an Olympic meet was six—in Barcelona '92 and Atlanta '96.

Rhoel Velasco clinched a bronze in Barcelona while Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco bagged a silver in Atlanta.

Asian International Boxing Association president Anwar Chowdry of Pakistan is set to plane in at 1 a.m. tomorrow to oversee the conduct of the boxfest.

Who's Shell's pick?

Moran wants player who'll fit team to a T



By June Navarro

IF HE were to choose from among the top candidates of the PBA rookie draft, newly installed Shell head coach John Moran will pick out the player who will fit the team to a T.

"If I were to pick from the rookies, I want to end up with a player who can play any position and fit the system of the team," said Moran, who took over the coaching reins for the Turbochargers from Perry Ronquillo, who resigned two months ago.

Although the 60-year-old Moran has a couple of players in mind, he isn't confining himself on Shell's pressing need to snatch a big man in the rookie draft on Jan. 16 at the Glorietta Activity Center.

The lack of a dominant center obviously took its toll on the Turbochargers, who wound up last among 10 teams during the previous season.

"But I haven't had a mind-set on one player or a single position. I'm looking at all positions and the best option available for the team," said Moran, last year's rookie camp director and Shell consultant.

Armed with the No. 1 pick in the rookie raffle, the Turbochargers will most likely exercise it on any one among Ervin Sotto, Ranidel de Ocampo, Fil-Australian Joachim Thoss, Marc Pingris and Rich Alvarez.

But Moran, whose claim to fame was a coaching stint with former Indiana Hoosiers coach Bobby Knight in the US NCAA, would rather keep the Turbochargers' cards close to his chest.

"After the rookie camp, we are going to evaluate everybody on the team and the rookies in the draft. We have just started fixing things up for Shell and definitely we're raising the level of play in the coming season," said Moran.

Moran added that his system requires players to be unselfish and teachable and the rookie of Shell's choice, he stressed, would have to possess those virtues.

He also bared that a couple of players could be unloaded from the Turbochargers' current roster, including the players whose contracts expired this year.

"But everything is still up in the air. It all depends on the outcome of the team's evaluation," said Moran, who came along with Shell team manager Bobby Kanapi and assistant team manager Vicky Araneta to the PBA rookie camp yesterday at the Quezon City Memorial Circle.

Moran will inherit Ronquillo's coaching staff composed of Joey Guanio, Jigs Mendoza and Herc Callanta. They will be joined by Benjie Sipin, a coaching guru at the University of Asia and the Pacific.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala briefs the players during yesterday's PBA rookie camp. Inset, Ervin Sotto (front) horses around with Marc Pingris. RUDY ESPERAS

SPORTSWATCH

9-ball Open today; Gabica still reigns

SOME 60 budding billiards talents plunge into action today in the 9-Ball Billiards Open Championship at the Elbow Room of The Podium at ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center in Mandaluyong City. Aside from vying for the champion's purse, the two finalists will also have the chance to battle back-to-back Tokyo 9-Ball Open champion Antonio "Gaga" Gabica in the "Search for Tanduáy the No. 1 Billiards Player" weekly challenge. Meanwhile, veteran campaigner Emil de la Paz gave Gabica a big scare in their duel at the Robinsons Malls yesterday before losing in the mandatory rematch, allowing Gabica to stay on as Tanduay's featured cue artist for the sixth straight week. Gabica held De la Paz to a 2-2 standoff before the challenger swept the next three racks to prevail, 5-2. In the rematch, Gabica got into the groove early and dictated the tempo to pull off a resounding 5-2 decision. "*Medyo pagod na rin ako, lalo na't patindi nang patindi ang nakakalaban ko sa* tournament *na ito. Naging malaking* challenge *talaga sa akin si* Emil (I'm tired, especially now that my foes get stronger by the week. Emil was a big challenge," said Gabica. The popular challenge matches was conceptualized by Tanduay advertising manager Larry Li with the support of Tanduay Distillers marketing manager Andres Co.

Miriam dominates Milo BEST caging

MIRIAM College ruled two divisions to emerge as the biggest winner in the recent Milo BEST Women's Basketball League (WBL). Miriam took the elementary and high school (competitive) titles, both at the expense of De La Salle Zobel. Miriam posted 45-33 and 65-52 victories in the elementary and prep divisions, respectively. University of Santo Tomas retained the college crown at the expense of Miriam, 49-42, while Holy Spirit (QC) nosed out New Era University, 57-55, in the high school (developmental) finals. Community of Learners, St. Mary's Academy, St. Scholastica's College and Ateneo de Manila University finished third in the elementary, high school (developmental), high school (competitive) and college levels, respectively. ComLearn tripped Poveda Learning Center, 39-21; St. Mary's trimmed St. Theresa's College, 21-18; St. Scholastica routed Assumption College, 70-55; and Ateneo downed Assumption, 50-46. Jennifer Dimaano, Katrina Rae L. Daza, Diwa Corazon B. Paz and Laarnee Rosero were named the most valuable players in the elementary, high school (developmental and competitive) and college divisions, respectively. The sportsmanship awards went to DLSZ (elementary), OB Montessori Center Inc. (developmental) and Poveda (competitive).

Aguilar, Jao lead Namssa honorees

THE NATIONAL Motorcycle Sports & Safety Association (Namssa) will honor the champions of the various 2003 motorcycle categories today at Gilligan's Island, Glorietta Center, Makati City. The country's first Asian Motocross champion and National Motocross Rider of the Year, Glenn Aguilar, SuperBike titlist Jolet Jao, junior motocross champ Kenneth San Andres and Scooter winner Jaime Barcial will be feted in ceremonies presided over by Namssa officials. Aguilar, the seven-time Motocross Rider of the Year awardee from the Caltex Revtex Team, gave the country its first international crown in the FIM Asian Motocross Championship by besting riders from Malaysia, Thailand, China, Australia and New Zealand. He also topped the Philippine National Motocross Championship races in Tuguegarao and Puerto Princesa cities. "They are all great riders and have given back much to the sport," Namssa president Ken Falco said of the awardees. The 2004 National Motocross Championship Series will start this Sunday in Batangas City with the staging of the 2nd Mayor's Cup Batangas National Motocross Race. For inquiries, call the Mahinhin Riders Club at 043-7229640, 7236835 or the co-organizer MP Turbo at 0919-4921575.

Year's first big derby unfolds at Big Dome

ALL roads lead to the Araneta Coliseum today when the NCA 7-Cock Derby, the first bigtime cockfighting event for 2004, gets going at 5 p.m. with more than 50 matches on tap. The 3-cock elimination round begins today, with the finale set on Wednesday. Hosts are Rep. Rudy Albano of the popular Mulawin entry and Pico Berin. Meanwhile, the World Slasher Cup 8-Cock International Derby gets underway at the Big Dome on Jan. 19, 21 and 23. The cockfest is hosted by Big Dome owner Nene Araneta, Gov. Ito Yñares and the Firefly Group. Eleven American cockers will banner the elite list of foreign participants. They are Roger Roberts, Johnny Moore, the legendary Ray Alexander of Alabama, C.D. Moore, Hector Hernandez, Wilbert Lee Blanc, Richard Harris, Bobby Fairchild, Jimmy Cody, Jerry Douglas and Sam Caudle Jr. Cockers and breeders from Mexico, Japan and Malaysia are also seeing action, according to Ynares. The locals will be headed by defending champions William Go (Gold Cup Jed and Joy), Pol Estrellado (Jade LCC) and Rep. Claude Bautista of Davao (R and B Farm Binangonan), who won the first leg, and tabloid executive Rey Briones (Islander RB) and Matt Bitanga (Golden Circle II), winners of the second leg. For inquiries, call 911-3101 and 911-2928.

CSL Griffins pull rug from under Jaguars

THE COLEGIO de San Lorenzo Griffins upset the Philippine School of Business Administration Jaguars, 93-85, last Saturday to stay on course for a semifinal berth at the resumption of the 11th NCR Athletic Association men's basketball tournament at the RTU gym.

The victory improved the Griffins' carryover win-loss slate to 2-2, a full game behind the 3-1 cards of the Jaguars, St. Francis of Assisi Doves and the Philippine Maritime Institute.

Earlier, national team mainstay Ranidel de Ocampo hit 22 points as the Doves blasted Rizal Technological University, 98-72.

Bonifacio Custodio banged in 19 points and led a 12-6 windup as Polytechnic University of the Philippines downed Emilio Aguinaldo College, 77-71, in overtime.

PMI leaned on Jerome Cenita's freethrows with only a few seconds left to nip the San Sebastian College of Cavite Baycats, 79-78.

Ken Rivera posted a team-high 29 points for the Griffins but it was Jeffrey Lim's heroics that sewed up CSL's first-class upset.

Lim, who scored 26 points, including six triples, unloaded three treys when the Jaguars threatened for the last time at 69-72.

Executive chess tourney Jan. 31

THE ACTIVE Chess Center of Asia (ACCA) will hold an executive tournament on Jan. 31 at the Land Bank Plaza in Malate, Manila.

The tournament, open to players rated 2000 and below, will serve as a side event to the grand finals of the 2003 Philippine Executive Active Chess Express.

At stake in this one-day tournament are cash prizes, trophy and chess books. For inquiries, call the ACCA at 892-8759.

Meanwhile, the quarterfinal pairings of the grand finals in the Elite section pit defending champion Jenny Mayor against Quirino Sagario; Tyrone Guya vs Dennis San Juan; Ravel Canlas vs Edwin Lorenzo; and Ryan ruiz vs Noel Garcia.

Pacquiao would quit ahead without Roach

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THE PRESIDENT, maybe in top fighting form, was a no-show.

But world boxing phenom Manny Pacquiao, black coat with no tie, 10 pounds over the featherweight limit, came and promptly declared readiness to fight for the retention of Freddie Roach, his trusted American tutor and trainer.

Pacquiao, a pirate's ring dangling on his left ear, declared that nobody could fire or take away Roach from his team.

This was on Saturday at the Manila Pavilion where Philippine Sportswriters Association brought out its best for the outstanding athletes and President Macapagal-Arroyo could only send son Mikey, a racehorse enthusiast.

Mikey, expected to help give out the trophies, sat there for a while but left before the major honorees could be called in.

He was instead hugely represented by PSC chair Eric Buhain, still under question for allegedly importing racehorses for Mikey using the license of the government sports agency.

***

There was no official message from Malacañang either in that night of nights for RP sports.

Bowler CJ Suarez, reigning World Cup champ, got his deserved applause after reading a brief, well-crafted speech.

But the biggest hand went to Pacquiao, Suarez's co-Athlete of the Year, whose heartfelt gratitude was superbly, sufficiently, sincerely expressed as he muttered thank you and *maraming salamat po* (thank you) close to a dozen times.

It was indeed a thankful sporting year, when rugged sports scribes also dressed their Sunday best.

But not for PSA president Bert Cuevas, who suffered a stroke a week before the grand affair but still labored from his sickbed to ensure a memorable, excellent night for the top honorees and the expected guests from Malacañang.

***

Look, if Manny Pacquiao had learned about the condition and whereabouts of Cuevas, he would have headed straight to that obscure hospital somewhere in Cavite to thank the intrepid PSA big boss.

But the great thing is that Bert Cuevas had insisted on secrecy and, through enviable remote control, succeeded in mounting one of the most memorable editions of the PSA Annual Awards.

Who knows? It may take years, even decades, before they could be graced by a world-recognized honoree like Manny Pacquiao, who may yet go down as the greatest Filipino boxer of all time.

In the same vein, let me state that it may take just as long before they could elect or find an unsinkable PSA president of Cuevas' caliber and spirit.

***

Anyway, Pacquiao, upon being asked by the INQUIRER, readily brushed off threats by Murad Muhammad, his sleek, wily US promoter, to kick out the renowned and respected trainer Freddie Roach from Team Pacquiao.

Murad definitely hated Roach's guts after the trainer started questioning why the actual purses were hidden from Pacquiao as Murad allegedly pocketed hefty shares of the champion's share.

Exposed, Murad next vowed to do everything in his capacity to get rid of Roach.

However, Pacquiao, appearing serene, flatly dumped Murad's brag.

"I decide, I call the shots, *ako ang nag*-decision *para sa sarili ko*," Pacquiao remarked.

Not your manager, not your business manager, not your wife?

"I do the fighting, *ako ang nakipagbugbugan, alam ko ang tama sa akin*."

***

Yes, Pacquiao knows what's best for him.

And he was quick to assure that nobody, but nobody, could be better than Freddie Roach.

In the first place, Pacquiao explained, he could not have been where he's now if not for Roach.

He said the strict, tough, brilliant trainer, on whom he has full faith and confidence, will be at his corner for as long as he fights.

Short of telling Murad to quit if he can't see eye-to-eye with Roach, Pacquiao added that he hopes to have an honest and clear accounting of all earnings and expenses in his next fights.

Murad, called a thief by Roach, had struck back.

He had given Roach several unsavory labels.

But Pacquiao, 25, 136 lbs, said it would always be Roach over Murad or anybody else in his team.

If they take out Freddie, Pacquiao confided, he would opt to retire sooner than planned. He said he would stay three more years in the ring at most if Roach stops working his corner.

Or it could be a lot shorter than that!

***

(KUDOS: International boxing referee Bruce McTavish would like to tell everybody the names of the airport cops who saved him from a knockout, if not from a heart attack, by returning his clutch bag containing dollars, passport, credit cards, etc. which he left in a pushcart when he returned from Narita after working a title bout in Japan last Jan 4. They are: Cpls. EDGARDO MONTERAGO, JACK FUNTANILLA, OLGA ABOBO and ROY PUZON *(RT supplied the caps.—Ed)* Nice to know we still have some good people in RP, the overjoyed ref said . . . A big hand to the Ateneo women's basketball Team B (fondly called Mahusay), coached by Benjie Sipin, which won the bronze medal in last month's Women's BB League conducted by the BEST Center.)

MERCEDES GOLF

Appleby reclaims top spot

TIGER Woods fires eight-under 65.

APALUA, Hawaii—Stuart Appleby reclaimed the lead at the PGA Tour season-opening Mercedes Championships on Saturday after shooting a seven-under-par 66 in the third round.

The Australian, who held the first-round lead, is at 20-under-par, two ahead of Fiji's Vijay Singh, who shot 64 on Friday to take the second-round lead and followed it up with a four-under 69.

South Africa's Retief Goosen shot the day's low round, a nine-under-par 64 to leap up to third place at 15-under-par.

One shot back is Britain's Darren Clarke, who made an eagle from 192 yards on the par-four 17th to highlight a 69.

World number one Tiger Woods finally broke 70, shooting an eight-under-par 65 and moved within seven shots of the lead at 13-under-par.

Defending champion Ernie Els registered his second even-par 73 and trails back in 23rd place in the 30-player field at three-under-par.

After a four-year absence at the Mercedes Championships, the 32-year-old Appleby has played some of his finest golf through 54 holes, minimising mistakes and capitalizing on good shots.

"Today was not too dissimilar to the other days," Appleby said.

"Played solid golf through basically all three days. Really nothing much different, I'm sorry to say." In what could only be described as a content, almost docile approach, Appleby has spent the first three rounds doing nothing more than executing shots and paying no attention to the rest of the field or his position on the leaderboard.

After Singh took the second-round lead with a 64, Appleby was unruffled.

"I'll just be going out, doing what I'm doing," Appleby said of his approach to Sunday's final round.

"I can't really do anything else but that. That's certainly working for me.

Get the golfing gods on my side. What everyone else does is up to them." With Singh, Goosen and Woods bunched up behind him, Appleby is staring down at a trio that has combined to win 11 major championships. *AP*

Moya in final vs Paradorn

MADRAS, India—Top seed Carlos Moya of Spain and defending champion Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand booked themselves into the ATP Indian Open final with contrasting semifinal wins on Saturday.

Crowd favorite Paradorn survived six match points against Tommy Robredo of Spain before qualifying for his third successive final here with a tough 1-6, 7-6 (12/10), 7-5 win.

World number seven Moya hardly broke sweat as he cruised past third seed Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands 6-3, 6-4 in the second semi-final at the Nungambakkam stadium.

The final, worth $52,000 and 35 ATP Champions Race points to the winner, will be played between the pre-tournament favorites on Sunday. *AFP*

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In-form Knicks halt streaking Bucks

NEW YORK—The New York Knicks snapped their four-game losing streak Saturday by shutting out the Milwaukee Bucks in the final three minutes of a 94-88 victory.

Kurt Thomas had a season-high 28 points and 16 rebounds, Allan Houston scored 26, Stephon Marbury had 14 points and 11 assists, and Penny Hardaway added 14 points off the bench.

New York snapped Milwaukee's five-game winning streak and beat the Bucks for the first time in consecutive attempts this season.

Knicks coach Chaney would not concede that the victory might have been crucial to his continued employment.

"I've said this before: We have to get to the playoffs," Chaney said. "One win or loss shouldn't make a difference."

Two nights after the crowd at Madison Square Garden chanted "Fire Chaney" several times during a blowout loss to Houston, the fans returned to the usual practice of cheering for their team.

New York missed three jumpers and then committed a turnover off a bad pass by Marbury with 32 seconds remaining. The Bucks got the ball to Tim Thomas for a bank shot from 14 feet that rolled out with 11.8 seconds left.

Michael Redd led the Bucks with 19.

In Washington, Larry Hughes scored a season-high 43 points to lead Washington, the NBA's second-worst team, to a rare victory over Philadelphia.

COMPLETE RESULTS

New York 94, Milwaukee 88; Washington 94, Philadelphia 87; Minnesota 83, Miami 77; Chicago 89, New Orleans 84; San Antonio 89, Indiana 88 (OT); Utah 92, Atlanta 71; Golden State 113, Seattle 110 (OT). *AP*

Wind Blown's stud fee: P50,000

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I DID not have much time to exchange banter with some of my esteemed friends in horseracing during last Friday's annual PSA Awards Night at the Manila Pavilion honoring the country's outstanding sports achievers in the year just ended, but this much I can say: The sport of kings was well represented in the affair by its direct players like Philippine Racing Commission chair Jaime Dilag, Philracom commissioners Vergel Cruz and Eduardo Jose, much respected Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners president Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, dapper Hermie Esguerra, proud owner of super horse Wind Blown, voted Horse of the Year, and Patty Dilema, the country's top jockey.

I also learned that multiawarded Wind Blown, who was recently retired to stud, commands a stud fee of P50,000, the standard service fee charged by the owners of other stud horses, including the imported ones. However, there are handsome incentives awaiting Wind Blown's future progenies.

Together with a renowned surety company, owner Esguerra and his connections launched recently the "Wind Blown Sire's Produce Incentive Program." A first-ever program in Philippine horseracing history, not only to ensure Wind Blown's future progenies with cash rewards but also to make sure that his nicks live up to the public's expectations, to ensure that this awesome horse is given every chance to succeed as a sire.

Wind Blown will stand his first season in 2004 at the well-maintained Herma Farm and Stud located in Dagatan, Lipa City in Batangas, a province widely known as the hub of horse breeding in the Philippines.

The concept behind the Wind Blown Sire's Produce Incentive Program is as follows:

1. All progenies of Wind Blown during his first season as a sire (2004), which will be foaled in 2005, will be eligible to participate and win stakes prizes in the following races in 2007; Wind Blown Juvenile Colts (P1-million race), Wind Blown Juvenile Fillies (P1 million race); and Wind Blown Juvenile Championship Bonus Race. The races are exclusively for Wind Blown progenies only;

2. The races will be scheduled during the last quarter of 2007;

3. A P1-million bonus prize will be given to a Wind Blown progeny that will win the Philracom Juvenile (Open) Championship Race;

4. The races are subject to all racing rules and regulations of the host club, as approved by the Philippine Racing Commission.

All told, a good two-year-old in 2007 from Wind Blown's first foal crop could possibly win P2 million. But there will be more to come.

In the Wind Blown SP Bonus Prizes in 2008, any Wind Blown progeny that will win any leg of the 2008 Triple Crown Championship Series shall be entitled to a bonus prize of P1 million. And should a Wind Blown progeny win all three legs of the 2008 Triple Crown Championship Series, the winning horse shall be entitled to a bonus prize of P3 million, on top of the P1-million bonus prize guaranteed for every Triple Crown leg won.

In effect, a potential Triple Crown champion in 2008 sired by Wind Blown will receive a whopping P6 million in bonus prizes from the Wind Blown Sire's Produce Incentive Program.

Foaled in 1997, Wind Blown (Hazim-Wind in my Hair by Cox's Ridge) sire line is the very successful Danzig-Northern Dancer-Phalaris line. According to TV executive and racing buff Jake Maderazo, Danzig has produced 141 stakes winners from 418 runners, earning a total of $77.6 million. "This means Wind Blown colts should carry the so-called successful-chromosome of its grandsire Danzig."

On the other hand, the female family of Wind Blown is also impressive, with winning dam Cold Hearted producing stakes winners in the United States such as Baltic, Chill, Tranquility Lake and Kentucky Derby winner Caveat, Dew Line and Benchmark, to name a few, proving the versatility of both the male and female bloodlines of Wind Blown. Because of this, his legions of fans are now eagerly awaiting the arrival of the first batch of Wind Blown babies in 2005 and looking forward to many successful runs by his juvenile colts and fillies in 2007.

***

FEU'S SPORTS LEGACY. Far Eastern University, cited by the Philippine Sportswriters Association during Friday's PSA Awards Night for winning the 2003 UAAP basketball championship, is also well known in other sports disciplines from way, way back. In the 1950s and early '60s, FEU was a force to reckon with in boxing, swimming, tennis, track and field, baseball and football. "Mighty Mite" Felicisimo "Totoy" Ampon, then considered as the world's best tennis player pound-for-pound, was named the first PSA Athlete of the Year in 1950.

In swimming, FEU boasted the legendary Haydee Coloso-Espino, dubbed as "Asia's Swim Queen," for capturing a record 10 medals in the Asian Games of 1954 (in Manila), 1958 (Tokyo) and 1962 (Jakarta). And in boxing, the Morayta-based university produced the one and only Anthony Villanueva, who won the Philippines' first silver medal in the Olympics, accomplishing the feat in 1964 in Tokyo. I understand university officials, headed by Dr. Lourdes Reyes Montinola, chair of the FEU Board of Trustees, are planning to compile a record of these sports achievers in book form. A welcome move, indeed. *Mabuhay*!

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'Live' scoring for Mango Tee on Alabang website

NEAR-REAL time reporting of tournament results on the club website will be one of several innovations for the 20th edition of the Mango Tee, the member-guest invitational of the Alabang Country Club Inc.

Presented by Smart Communications and set to tee off on Feb. 5-8, the Mango Tee tournament is considered the trailblazer among all club invitationals.

It moves a step ahead again with the improved technical handling of the results designed to provide all the 512 members and guests a live update—at acci.com.ph—of the team and individual scoring.

Ed Lacson, overall chair of the Mango Tee committee, said web reporting is one of the welcome innovations intended to make the 20th year of the event truly a grand celebration.

Lacson's committee, which also includes Johnny Castillo, Cid Diomampo, Jun Galindez, Leo Villanueva, Ernie Limjuco, Boni Pimentel, Boy Leonio, Tom Banguis and Angel Apuyan, devised the TEAM concept.

"Technical, Economic, Arrangement and Management (TEAM) are the committees we've formed to boost the success rate of this endeavor," said Lacson while crediting the support of the ACCI board of directors headed by its president Pablo de Borja.

Mitsubishi Motors, a co-presenter like Taylor Made, adidas and Pilipinas Shell, is staking brand-new cars in all four par-3s as hole-in-one prizes. A Mitsubishi Lancer will also be the grand raffle prize in the awards ceremony on Feb. 8, to go with merchandise worth P600,000.

Sharp, Standard Chartered Bank, The Turf Co. and Nestle Phils. are area sponsors while FedEx, Pepsico Beverages, Intl. and Security Bank/Diners Club are premium sponsors.

Hole sponsors are Acro Industrial, Ayala Land, Club 515, City Service Corp., East West Bank, Food Link, General Milling Corp., GG&A, Gloria Maris, Golfers Club Shares, Inc., Haji Andi Tabusalla, Joseph Rice Mills, Palms Pointe/2301 Civic Place, PNCC Skyway, Prudential Life, San Miguel Brewing, T&C Construction, The Bellevue, True Value and YKK Zipper Phils. are hole sponsors.

All 256 team slots in the event were snagged as soon as registration was opened early in November and organizers are still thinking of ways on how to accommodate some of those on wait-list.

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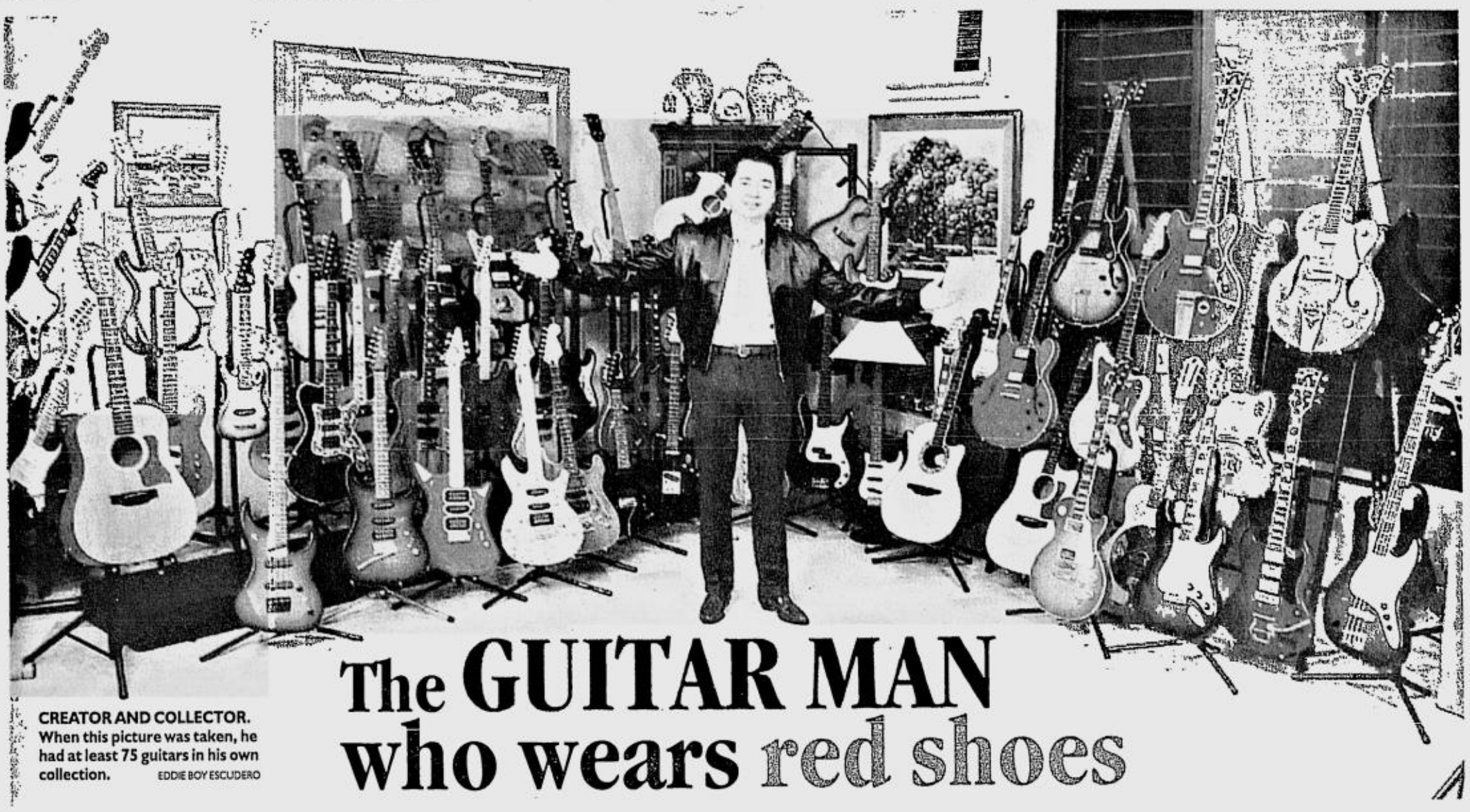


CREATOR AND COLLECTOR. When this picture was taken, he had at least 75 guitars in his own collection. EDDIE BOY ESCUDERO

The GUITAR MAN who wears red shoes

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

SEVENTY-FIVE guitars, a shirt with a guitar print, and a guitar lamp are only some of the items in this Urdaneta Village, Makati home that identify its owner as Ramon "RJ" Jacinto.

RJ is known as the Guitar Man because of his love for and genius in playing the guitar and because he also makes guitars. He used to try out the guitars that he manufactured before these were distributed in the stores. He also designs the guitars, but he now focuses on pick-up research at home using a machine called a pick-up winder.

"I wind copper wire (guitar string) with the machine," he explains. "The sound depends on the wire, the size of the wire and the magnet you use. I'm also experimenting with magnets, and with the number of windings to get the sound I want."

He is understandably proud of RJ guitars, which he has been making since 1988, and is even prouder of the quality of his pick-ups, which magnifies electrically the guitar tone. "We really have outstanding pick-ups," he says. "To me, they're even better than the US brands."

Still, he says he has yet to think about exporting the guitars. "We can't even make enough here," he adds. He has also gone into selling guitars. He has stores at Robinson's Galleria in Ortigas, at Ali Mall in Cubao, and at Park Square and Save A Lot More in Makati.

Elvis Presley and the Beatles are RJ's biggest musical influences, along with the Beach Boys and Eric Clapton.

"They were very, very good musicians," he says. "Classic rock *talaga ang gusto ko*."

Through the years, his love for music translated into many things, including helping publish a music-oriented magazine when he was in his teens, establishing his own radio station, and putting up his own chain of music bars, the RJ Bistro.

The magazine, "Teenstone," folded up with his teen years. He closed the last of his bistros three years ago. But his radio station, dzRJ, which started out as a backyard radio station in his parents' home, celebrated its 40th year last October.

At 58, RJ still plays the six-string with as much enthusiasm and passion as when he first held the instrument when he was 12. He still performs at Hard Rock Café where he plays every Wednesday, at the Mandarin Oriental on the first and third Thursdays of the month starting Jan. 22, and at the new Dish at ABS-CBN every Friday.

"*Pag masaya ang tao habang tinutugtugan mo, 'pag sumasayaw sila* and they're enjoying themselves, that's the biggest satisfaction I get," he says.

"That's why I play, and you have to play live, otherwise you lose your skills."

Out of the Closet

RJ laughs as he recalls that in his youth, they had their own version of the k-hon, which today's acoustic musicians use as an alternative to the much louder percussion instruments.

"Back in our time we had the *kumbatchero*, an improvised drum made from gasoline containers. The k-hon is really a modern version of the *kumbatchero*."

"They're very good, ha," he says of today's bands. "I like Barbie's Cradle. I like Parokya ni Edgar. They're very creative and they have taste. I'm also impressed by the Brownbeats. Nina is also good. And I'm impressed by Nyoy Volante, he's got the passion, he's got the feel. When he sings, he really feels it."

RJ was the man behind the hits such as Sampaguita's "Nosibalasi," Father and Sons' "Miss na Miss Kita," and Andrew E's "Humanap Ka ng Panget."

But aside from writing songs, RJ says he wants to produce younger bands. "I want to do more of that because there are a lot of young talents and they just need a little guidance," he says, adding that as his mission, he wants to share his experience with them.

"I have a radio station and I have a recording studio," he says, before showing INQUIRER Entertainment the things in his closets. "If I have those blessings and I can help other people with them, I think it is incumbent upon me to do it."

Shirts. "This one is from a cowboy store in the States. I bought it because Elvis played cowboys in some of his movies, like 'Love Me Tender.'

"This one is my favorite because it has guitars in the design. Somebody gave this to me. I think it's from Hawaii. I wear this in rock concerts."

Slacks. "I don't wear jeans, so I use mostly slacks, cotton slacks. I buy them from the Italian stores here. *Gusto ko 'yung* stretch *na manipis na* smooth and Italian-made."

Formal wear. "For formal wear I have Lanvin suits. It's a French brand but it is made in Italy."

Shoes. "These boots are about 10 years old. I bought them in the a cowboy store in the States, but I hardly wear them. I like cowboy boots but it's too warm in the Philippines.

"I have red shoes because red is my favorite color." Among these are Converse and Nike sneakers, Bally, Ferragamo and Bruno Magli leather shoes.

Jackets. "This leather jacket I bought in an Italian store in Hong Kong. I like Italian brands, because they're in soft leather. I lived in Rome for a while during my exile, that's why I got to like Italian things."

Perfumes. "This one is my perfume, Pino. It smells like Baguio, pine trees. It's Italian."

Watches. "This is Tiffany. I have to wear a square watch because when I'm playing the guitar, *hindi puwede 'yung* round watch *kasi nasasagi*. It has to be square."

Books. "'Classic Rock' by Gary Cee. It was given to me by a PAL purser, Mon Vecin, who used to have a band that played at Bistro RJ. He died of cancer."

Guitars. "These are my most treasured guitars. One is an RJ guitar, and it's all-shell. I treasure this because it was made so well.

"The other one is my first American-made guitar. Gretsch and Atkins. I got it when I was 15. My mom bought it for $550 in 1961. This is my favorite because I wrote my first hit with this when I was 15. The song is called 'Weightless,' and it became a big hit.

"I have a lot of American guitars like Fender, Gibson and Taylor acoustic guitars. Mostly Gibsons and Fenders, really.

"After Martial Law happened, I was gone for 14 and a half years. Most of my memorabilia is gone. I had vintage guitars then, Stratomasters, Jazz Masters.

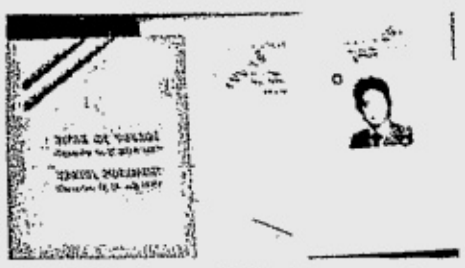
Albums. "This was my first album. I don't have the actual vinyl album. A friend cleaned it up and turned it into a CD.

"This one was the first album I released, 'Teenage Touch.' I was 16 when we did this.

"This one is the original release of 'Muli' from 1977. I was in San Francisco then. I sent 'Muli' here and it became a hit without me being here, so this is very valuable to me.

"These are the original issues of the recordings I released after my exile, 'Guitar Man' and 'Back from Exile,' from 1988."

PRINT IT. As a teener, he was also a part of this magazine.



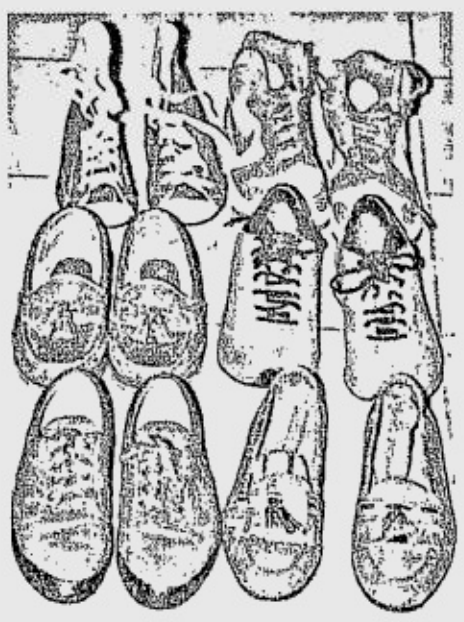
IN EXILE during martial law, his passport was canceled (right) and he had to use a French-issued travel document, his only "link to freedom."

SINGING COWBOY favors guitar shirt and a cowboy's red, white and blue.

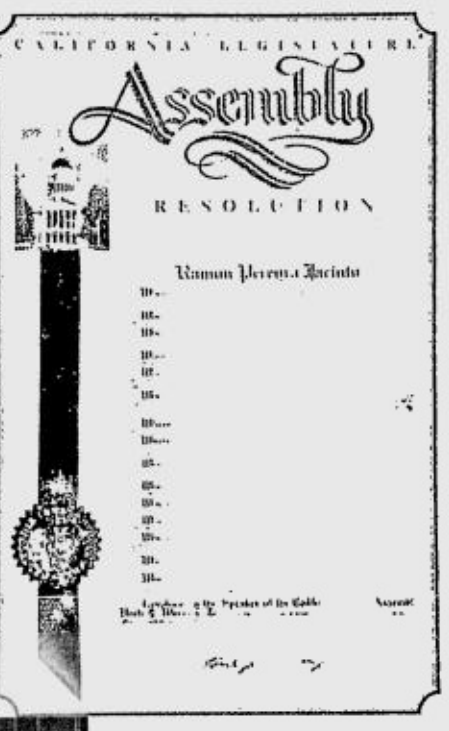
SOFT SPOT for Italian. He likes his jackets Italian-made and in soft fabric or leather.

THE MASK OF EDSA DOS, worn by his group

PINO & TIFFANY

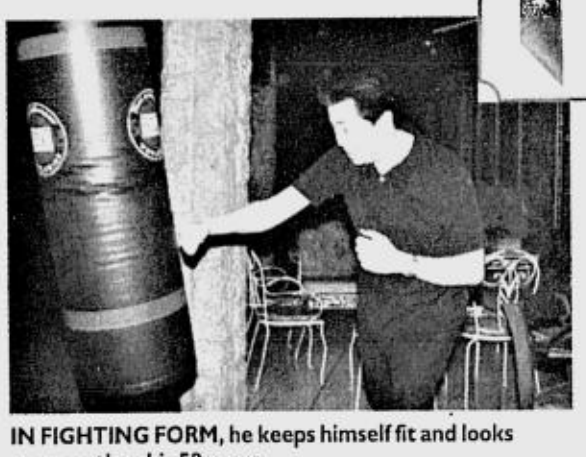


RED-FOOTED. Whether they're leather or sneakers, he likes them flaming. He also likes boots (below), although they're too warm for Manila.



CALIFORNIA PRAISIN'. The speaker of the US state recently gave him this award for his contributions to the music industry and for his being an entrepreneur.

MA AND PA Dina and Fernando occupy a special place in front of small glass containers holding their ashes on both sides of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



IN FIGHTING FORM, he keeps himself fit and looks younger than his 58 years.

Photos by Rudy Esperas

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7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
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9 MALIKMATA
10 BRIDAL SHOWER

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5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
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9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MALIKMATA
11 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
12 FILIPINAS

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4 CRYING LADIES
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6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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3 FILIPINAS
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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2 THE GATHERING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
6 MALIKMATA
7 GAGAMBOY
8 MANO PO 2
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
11 CRYING LADIES
12 FILIPINAS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MALIKMATA
3 FILIPINAS
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

SM CITY ILOILO
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 RESERVED
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 CRYING LADIES
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 RESERVED
8 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MANILA
1 THE GATHERING
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 MANO PO 2
8 MALIKMATA
9 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
10 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
11 FANTASTICMAN
12 GAGAMBOY

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2 MANO PO 2
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
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1 LOTR3 - 10:40, 2:20, 6:00, 10:00
2 CRYING LADIES - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
3 MALIKMATA - 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:50
4 THE GATHERING - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00
6 BRIDAL SHOWER - 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
7 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00

Metro East Marcos hway 682-8193/99 682-0280
1 MALIKMATA
2 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 CRYING LADIES
6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
7 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
8 MANO PO 2

Novaliches 935-3229 / 31
1 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
2 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPTAIN BARBELL
6 FILIPINAS
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 MANO PO 2

Cainta Brgy. Sto. Domingo, Ortigas Extension 240-4461
1 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Malabon 288-0985/2575
1 CRYING LADIES
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Sta. Rosa (049)537-0907
LOTR3 MANO PO 2 MALIKMATA BRIDAL SHOWER JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
Lipa, Batangas (043)757-3664/312-5870
1 CRYING LADIES
2 HOMECOMING
3 GAGAMBOY
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

Dasmariñas (046)5022125
LOTR3 CRYING LADIES BRIDAL SHOWER CAPTAIN BARBELL FILIPINAS
Imus (046)471-8188 / 875-5858
1 LOTR3
2 LOTR3
3 THE GRUDGE
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 MALIKMATA
6 CAPTAIN BARBELL

Bacolod (034)441-0458/59
LOTR3 LOTR3 JEEPERS CREEPERS THE GRUDGE CRYING LADIES OUT OF TIME
Iloilo (033)336-8070 to 78
1 LOTR3
2 JEEPERS CREEPERS
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR3
5 FILIPINAS
6 BRIDAL SHOWER

Star Mills San Fernando Pampanga (045)875-1927 (045)961-5270
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 FILIPINAS
3 CRYING LADIES
4 MANO PO 2
5 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
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Sight for sore eyes

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Monday, Phoemela Baranda started appearing as Paolo Bediones' new co-host on Channel 7's "Extra Challenge." How did she fare?

Pretty well, although she didn't get a chance to really strut her stuff, because she went on-camera only occasionally. Most of the time, the show focused on its "comebacking" challengers and all the icky or embarrassing tasks they were being made to perform.

Still, Phoemela didn't make any major booboos, and her sprightly beauty was a sight for sore eyes. Let's hope, however, that she gets more exposure in future episodes, so that she can assert herself as a strong presence on the show, and thus hasten her stellar ascent.

Paolo looked pleased as punched with the promising way that his new "partner" was coming along. But he still did most of the spiels, giving Phoemela an easy entry into the program.

Of course, Paolo's fans wonder if he has found more than just a co-host in his latest TV colleague. A number of women have co-hosted shows with Paolo, and then went on to marry somebody else. Will Phoemela prove to be an exception to the desultory rule?

In any case, Paolo and Phoemela will have a lot of time for professional and personal bonding in the months ahead. They will have to work together a lot, since the show is aired five times a week, and eats up new program material like crazy.

To come up to the high standard for guts and gumption set by Paolo's former co-host, **Miriam Quiambao**, Phoemela will have to push herself to the limit in terms of physical derring-do—with Paolo in solicitous attendance, of course.

With its hosting needs now properly addressed, "Extra Challenge" can now turn its attention to some problems involving its program content, specifically the occasionally excessive tests that it thinks up for its hapless "challengers."

It's true that foreign shows with a similar format are even more yukkily over-the-top, with contestants on "Fear Factor" being made to clench dead rats in their teeth, then hurl them into a big can, in a grisly version of basketball. But our TV people shouldn't imitate such extreme "sports" because they turn local televiewers off.

Yes, some viewers like to get shocked and dote on controversy and scandalous behavior. But this is a bottom-of-the-barrel propensity that responsible broadcast people shouldn't countenance, much less encourage and exploit.

'Brother Bear'

PHIL Collins found a new outlet for his musical talent when he wrote songs especially for Disney's animated feature, "Tarzan," in 1991. More than a decade lat-

SIGHT/ A30

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LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 2:15, 6:00, 9:45	BUFFALO SOLDIERS R13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 3:00, 6:45, 10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Jason Mraz is also coming

From page A31

My Rocket to Come" and best alternative song for his catchy hit, "The Remedy."

The young Mraz creates a mix-and--match of different genres of music. It's been done before, but he manages to add some magic to his music that makes it seem so original.

The album "Waiting for My Rocket to Come" contains soulful songs that became his springboard to fame, from small coffee shops in San Diego to his stardom today.

"Waiting for My Rocket to Come" is one of those rare debut albums that win listeners and critics alike.

Watch and hear Mraz sing the hit single "The Remedy" as well as and his other songs, including "You and I Both," "No Stopping Us," "Sleep All Day," and Curbside Prophet."

The Manila concert will have a very special guest—acoustic sensation Paolo Santos.

The "Jason Mraz Live in Manila" concert is presented by Warner Music Philippines in cooperation with Eventscape Manila (561-0442). Tickets are available at Ticketworld outlets at all major National Bookstore branches.

Sight for sore eyes

From page A29

er, he's done the same for the studio's latest animated blockbuster, "Brother Bear."

His first song for the movie, "Great Spirits," gets a spirited performance by **Tina Turner**. The song establishes the film's theme of brotherhood.

The most unusual song in "Brother Bear" is "Transformation," which accompanies lead character Kenai's change from human to bear form. At first, Collins assumed he was going to sing it, but he ended up using the Bulgarian Women's Choir! It doesn't sound like anything that's been heard in a Disney movie before, and Collins describes it as "a kind of melting pot—definitely world music!"

The joyous, optimistic "On My Way" is sung by Collins and **Jeremy Suarez.**

Ingram, Austin

THE VALENTINE show "Heart to Heart" showcases **James Ingram** and **Patti Austin** in back-to-back performances at the Manila Film Center Open Ground at 8:30 p.m. on Feb. 14. Call 911-5555 or 373-5734.

The concert repertoire includes "One Hundred Ways," "She loves Me," "True Love," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "Where Did My Heart Go?," "There's No Easy Way," "Somewhere Out There," "If I Believe," "All Behind Us Now," "In My Life," "Whatever We Imagine" and "Just Once."

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BRIDAL SHOWER
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	BRIDAL SHOWER
B	LORD OF THE RINGS
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MANO PO 2
CINEMA-2	MALIKMATA
CINEMA-3	FANTASTIC MAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOTR 3 RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CAPTAIN BARBELL
CINEMA-6	FILIPINAS
CINEMA-7	GAGAMBOY
CINEMA-8	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOTR 3 RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOTR 3 RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	LOTR 3 RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-12	LOTR 3 RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-14	CRYING LADIES
CINEMA-15	BRIDAL SHOWER

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-1	LORD OF THE RINGS 3
CINEMA-2	FILIPINAS
CINEMA-4	[illegible]

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	BRIDAL SHOWER
Ali 2	LORD OF THE RINGS
Ali 3	LORD OF THE RINGS
Ali 4	LORD OF THE RINGS
Ali 5	CRYING LADIES
Ali 6	MANO PO 2
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1 LORD OF THE RINGS 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10.45
2 LORD OF THE RINGS 12:15, 4:00, 7:45, 11:30
3 LORD OF THE RINGS 1:45, 5:30, 9:15, 12:35
4 LORD OF THE RINGS 10:45, 2:30, 6:15, 10:00

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	ArtFilm 1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THX 1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THX 1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
2 BRIDAL SHOWER	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THX 2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THX 3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	Opera M. BUTTERFLY Jan. 9 10 & 11	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
4 CRYING LADIES	4 BUFFALO SOLDIER		4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
	5 THE GATHERING		5 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	5 BRIDAL SHOWER
	6 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			
	7 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			

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2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 GATHERING
5 BUFFALO SOLDIER
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
8 CRYING LADIES
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL

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3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 CRYING LADIES

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(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 GAGAMBOY
2 MANO PO-2
3 CAPT. BARBEL
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BRIDAL SHOWER

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www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 MALIKMATA
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 GAGAMBOY
6 CRYING LADIES

Mstar
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(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 CRYING LADIES
2 GAGAMBOY

PREMIERE CINEMA
(Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
2 CRYING LADYS

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 MANO PO-2
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
5 GAGAMBOY
6 BRIDAL SHOWER
7 CRYING LADIES
8 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING
9 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 MANO PO-2
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 MALIKMATA
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 GAGAMBOY
8 CRYING LADIES
9 CAPT BARBEL

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083
1 GAGAMBOY
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 MANO PO-2

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 MANO PO-2
5 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
Lords BRIDAL SHOWER

Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 MANO PO-2
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY
5 MANO PO-2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 MANO PO-2
2 FANTASTIC MAN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR. RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 CRYING LADIES
6 MANO PO-2
7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
8
9

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CAPT BARBEL

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 CRYING LADIES
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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3 BRIDAL SHOWER

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2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
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2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 MANO PO-2
4 FANTASTIC MAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
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1 GAGAMBOY
2 CAPT BARBEL
3 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 CRYING LADIES
2 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 MALIKMATA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel)
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA

Lianas Cinema
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1 MALIKMATA
2 CAPT BARBEL
3 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

Lianas MovieCity
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1 LOTR RETURN OF THE KING
2 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPT BARBEL

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES
3 MANO PO-2

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 MALIKMATA
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR. RETURN OF THE KING
4 CAPT. BARBEL

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 FANTASTIC MAN

Fiesta World Mall
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DI END. SA MULI.

Spiral Starecase live in Manila

THE SONG "More Today Than Yesterday" was written decades ago but it still gets people up on their feet to dance. Martin Nievera has a version. "Ally McBeal" lawyer Richard Fish sang it to his lady love.

The group behind this classic, the Spiral Starecase, and the man who wrote it, Pat Upton, will be in Manila for the first time to perform in "Pat Upton: More Today Than Yesterday" on Feb. 13, at the NBC Tent, in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

Upton wrote and sang such Spiral hits as "Our Day Will Come," "Broken Hearted Man," "Sweet Little Thing," "Since I Don't Have You," "No One for Me to Turn to," "The Thought of Loving You,"

UPTON

"Our Day Will Come," "Judas to the Love We Knew." His version of Burt Bacharach's "This Guy's In Love With You" also was a hit.

As Spiral Starecase's second single, "More Today Than Yesterday" is Upton's most famous song, reaching a top slot on the Billboard charts. The song has been recorded by such music greats as Johnny Mathis, Andy Williams, and by Martin Nievera.

In 1994, Upton recorded the album "Then & Now."

"More Today Than Yesterday" is staged by Steve O'Neal Soundtrack Productions. Tickets are available at Ticket World tel. 891-9999.

Jason Mraz is also coming

JASON Mraz will bring his engaging music to the Philippines on Feb. 21 when he performs in "Jason Mraz Live in Manila" at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex.

The concert will feature Mraz's songs from his debut album, "Waiting for My Rocket to Come."

Magic 89.9 has honored Mraz as best male artist, best album of the year for "Waiting for

JASON/ A30

MRAZ

Lea hopes for marriage full...

From page A32

(To Robert) **You must have reflected on the challenges of being married to Lea Salonga. Losing your privacy, for one. Essentially, when you marry Lea, it's like you are marrying the entire Filipino people as well since Lea is a source of national pride.**

Robert: I think it's great when she goes to the Philippines and gets the type of attention that she does. She deserves every bit of it because she is not only talented and intelligent, but more importantly, a good person with a great heart. I'm obviously very proud of her. That being said, I think it's important and healthy that we have the ability to get away from all of that and live like a normal couple in the States. She still gets recognized from time to time but not like in the Philippines. I think that type of attention could have adverse effects on your perception of reality if you couldn't get away from it.

Is there a side of Lea that you appreciate but the public does not know or rarely sees?

R: Her sense of humor. She never fails to make me smile and laugh. I think she shows that side of herself in some commercials and shows but not like when we are just doing normal things together.

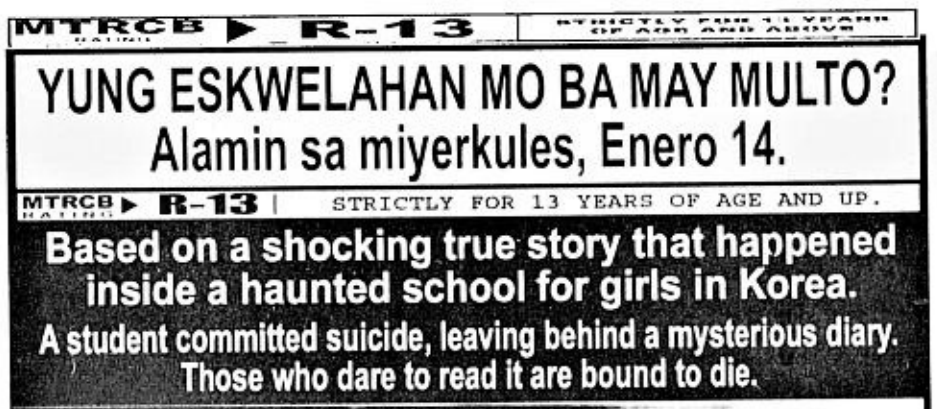
Describe in specific terms what kind of relationship and marriage you are hoping for.

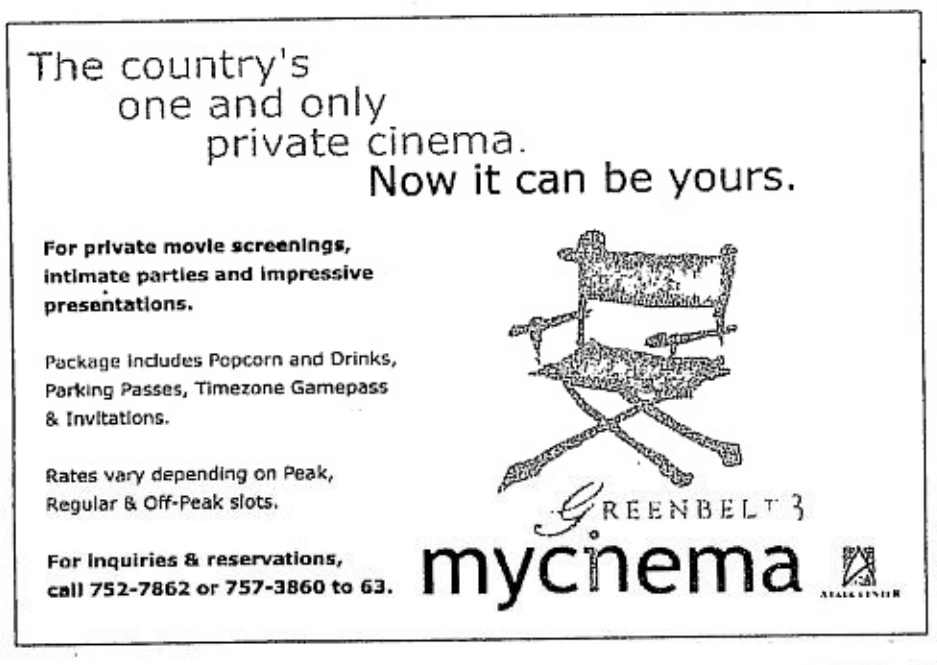
L: We're hoping for a strong marriage, of course. We also know it'll be a challenging task keeping things together. But we want to face them together head on, whatever they may be. We want it full of laughter and love. And hopefully, God willing, a couple of kids.

R: I hope we continue to grow together not only in our relationship with each other but also with God. Being with Lea has definitely brought me closer to God than when I wasn't with her. If we can continue to grow spiritually together, I think all other things will follow. At the same time, we both are very realistic in understanding that a marriage can be extremely challenging at times. Fortunately, we haven't had any time in our relationship where our love for each other was tested. But we both know that those times may come and I believe we are both ready and willing to overcome any challenges that life and or marriage may bring.

Where is the honeymoon going to be?

L: We're going to hold off on the honeymoon. We'll probably head to Asia for it, but we haven't decided where.





MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

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Lea hopes for marriage full of love laughter, and a couple of kids

By Janet and Ruben Nepales
L.A. Correspondents

LOS ANGELES—The first time we saw Lea Salonga and Robert Chien together at the lobby of Hollywood's Kodak Theater in the fall of 2001, we immediately thought they made an attractive pair.

Our photo captured the duo in their first ever public appearance as a couple. That night, Lea hosted the Ovation Awards, L.A.'s most prestigious theater awards show.

The next day, when we asked Lea to confirm that she and Robert were definitely "on," she told us in an e-mail, "Yes, he's officially my boyfriend now. Please make sure you spell his name right! ROBERT CHIEN!"

We asked Lea and Robert several questions before their Jan. 10 wedding. Somehow, even in the flurry of their wedding preparations, they found time to answer by e-mail. Lea said, "Truthfully, it's been pretty relaxed. No one's throwing a fit yet. We've been preparing for nearly a year and a half, so things have been happening slowly but surely."

"BORN AGAIN" with each other, Lea and Robert

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

It must have been tough to draw a final list of guests.

Lea: It was not an easy task for us to decide who to include on our list. We drew up lists of people we absolutely had to invite and went on from there. As time went on, it grew as we remembered family members, friends, and colleagues that we felt couldn't be left out. The final list ended up at over 300 people, when we originally intended for around 200. We had a feeling though that it would grow, and it did. How did we arrive at our final list? By playing it by ear. We winged it for most of the way.

Was the date January 10 chosen for any special significance?

L: It is a Saturday (the only day of the week that weddings are performed at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels). I didn't want to hit the Year of the Monkey in the Chinese calendar and I liked that the date ended with zero. I intentionally avoided dates ending with one, four, or seven. Other than that, there's no other significance.

Describe your gown (by Monique Lhuillier).

L: It's a classic design reminiscent of Grace Kelly's wedding dress, but updated. The top is long sleeved, constructed from two layers of lace. The skirt is organza, with asymmetrical bustles in the front and back (it'll be fully bustled in the back for the reception). The veil is a simple round veil, and we've decided to use crystal pins on my hair. Once I tried the gown on, I knew it was mine. It's not akin to being on stage for the first time. This is different.

We read that you were moved to tears when you sang "Two Words," the song that Louie Ocampo and Freddie Santos composed for your wedding, at your "Songs from Home" concert last September. What in the song touched you?

L: Nothing specific. The whole song just captured my feelings at this time of my life, and every time I heard (my brother) Gerard play it, and every time we performed it in concert, I couldn't help but cry. I thanked Louie Ocampo profusely when I saw him after the concert.

Since music is such a big part of your life, how did you choose the music for the wedding and the reception?

L: I wanted to avoid songs that were overplayed or too cliché to keep things from getting boring or mundane. We also wanted some Tagalog songs in there (with English translations in the program). In other words, we chose music that we liked. My friends will be singing at various points in the ceremony.

At the reception, we'll be singing our first dance. We both love to sing, so we thought to do that instead of just dance. Our first song, therefore, will be "With You I'm Born Again." At the time we chose it, we liked that the two soloists don't meet until near the end, and when they do, they sing in perfect harmony, and end singing the same note.

How do you think will your wedding day experience compare to your joy of winning the Tony or Olivier or the standing ovation on your show opening night, or opening night jitters?

L: Oh, the wedding will be so much bigger than anything I've ever experienced before. This is my life we're talking about, not a show where my run will end in a year. It's far, far more important than any show or award, and therefore, the nerves on this will be different from that of an opening night.

LEA/ A31

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BSP chief says growth target too high

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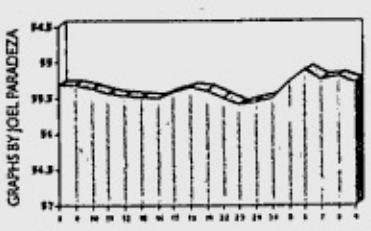


GOLD: $421.30-421.80
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 9, 2004

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE ECONOMY is not expected to expand by 5.8 percent this year, and even the low-end growth target of 4.9 percent is unlikely to be met, according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

The economic team had kept the GDP growth target this year at between 4.9 and 5.8 percent despite recommendations from the central bank to reduce the range to 4.5 to 5.3 percent. Last year, the GDP was estimated to have hit the low-end of the 4.2-5.2 percent range.

"Even the 4.9-percent GDP growth is already aggressive. Given that, we probably won't hit the higher end of 5.8 percent unless exports hit a high double-digit growth," Buenaventura said.

He pointed out that during the first half of the year, investors would be on a wait-and-see mode until a new administration shall have been elected in May. Concerns on the outcome of the election have driven most investors on the sidelines.

"If we have a peaceful and orderly elections, we could have an uptick in the second half especially if a clear and strong mandate is given to whoever wins the polls. Then we could have a renewed activity in the second half," the BSP chief said.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri earlier said that the higher growth in 2004 would be achieved given the absence of factors that dragged down growth potentials last year, particularly the El Niño weather disturbance that slowed down farm output, and the Middle East conflict that affected global demand and export growth.

Export growth should hit 10 percent this year while imports would continue expanding by 11 percent.

Neri said that election spending from the private sector estimated to reach about P30 billion should help boost the GDP especially in the first semester. He believed that the first half of the year leading to the elections would be "one big fiesta" nationwide.

With the liquidity that could be unleashed in the system, the BSP chief said that money supply could grow by 10 percent this year to support the economic objectives.

The sufficient liquidity would help monetary authorities keep the key policy rates at current levels of 6.75 percent for borrowing and 9 percent for lending. Credit demand from the private sector, according to Buenaventura, would remain sluggish and much of the liquidity would be used to buy government securities.

PLDT seen leading market higher

LOCAL stocks are seen to continue benefiting from a strong momentum as foreign funds, inspired by positive developments here and abroad, pour into the local market.

During the first trading week of the new year, the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 86.5 points or 6 percent to close at a 33-month high of 1,549.60.

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Eric Claudio, a dealer at Unicapital Securities, said the market was still showing signs of continued strength, fueled by the bullish sentiment on telecommunication giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

When the PLDT run-up loses steam, Claudio said the market would still benefit from rotational buying.

"The funds will go to the smaller companies which were left out during the recent rally," Claudio said.

He said the bullish US market was likewise boosting local market sentiment.

"The problem is that when the market has high expectations, you're setting it up for negative surprises. It might trigger some selling pressures," he said.

PLDT/ B2

Transport groups urged to operate own stations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy said it was supporting efforts by transport groups to operate their own fuel stations to cushion the effect of rising oil prices.

Energy Undersecretary JV Emmanuel de Dios said associations of public utility vehicle operators and drivers could do this by:

- entering into joint ventures with willing oil companies;
- forming cooperatives that would run fuel distribution businesses, and
- taking advantage of the DOE's P300-million training and loan fund for operating fuel stations.

De Dios said in a briefing that the DOE was stepping up coordination with and support efforts for transport groups in light of the current uptrend in fuel prices.

He said the groups could temper the effects of rising prices by availing themselves of bulk rates if they had their own fuel stations.

De Dios cited initial successes in such efforts when, last year, some jeepney groups based in the cities of Manila, Mandaluyong and Quezon were able to set up tank-and-pump facilities in their terminals.

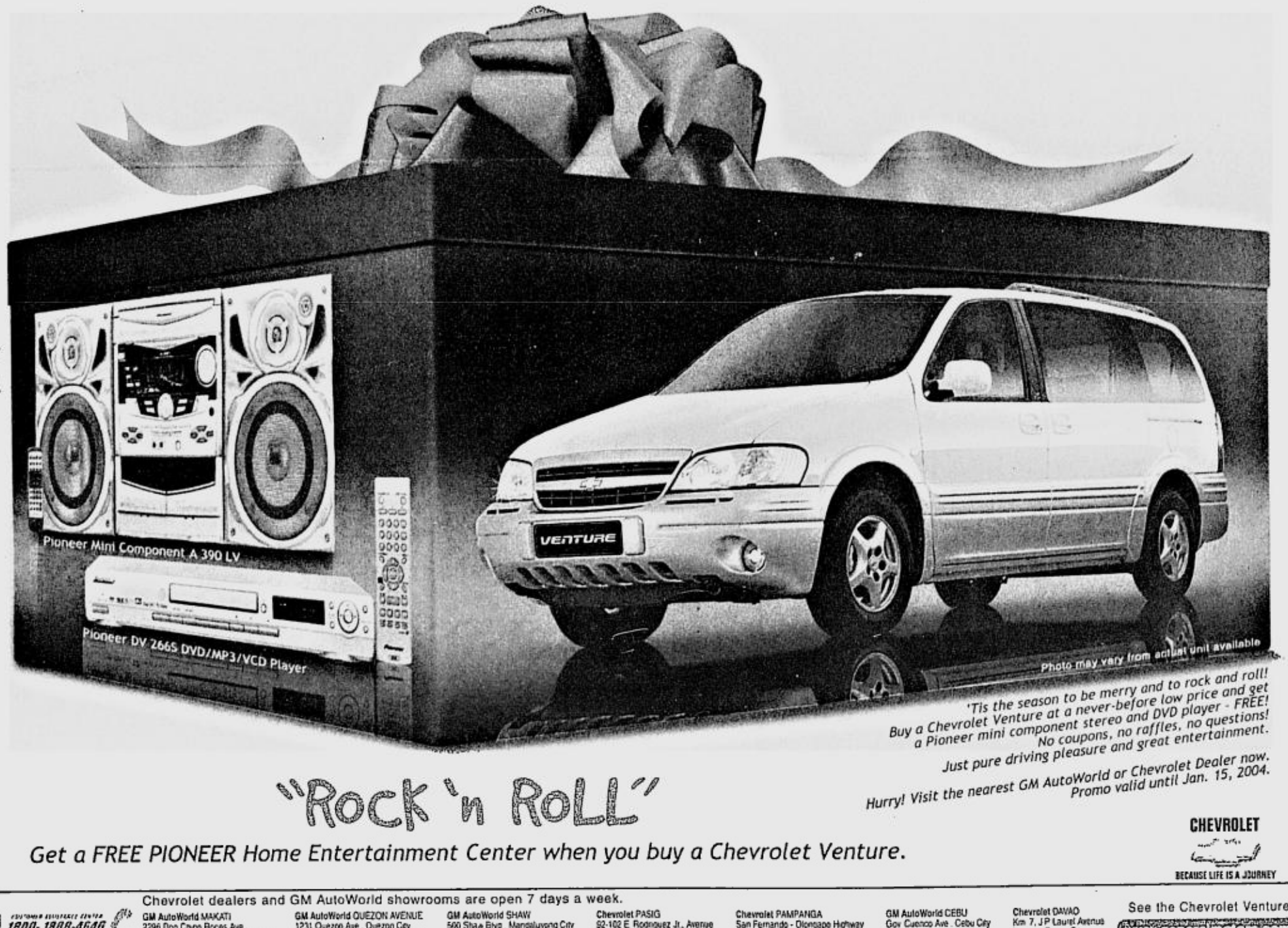
The Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association (Fejodap), Pasang Masda and Altodap enjoyed bulk rates that enabled them to sell to their members at rates lower than prevailing pump prices.

"We are also inviting transport groups to (apply for eligibility) in our Gasoline Station Training and Loan Fund program," De Dios said.

The P300-million program is provided under the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act, which mandates the release of such amount from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. to help promote retail competition in the oil industry.

Of the amount, P282 million would be used for lending and financial assistance while the remaining P18 million would be used for training and administrative expenses.

A Department Circular issued in May 2002 allowed individuals, partnerships, cooperatives, associations, nongovernment organizations and corporations to enter into joint venture/supply agreements with independent oil companies for the establishment of refilling stations and the retailing of liquefied petroleum gas.



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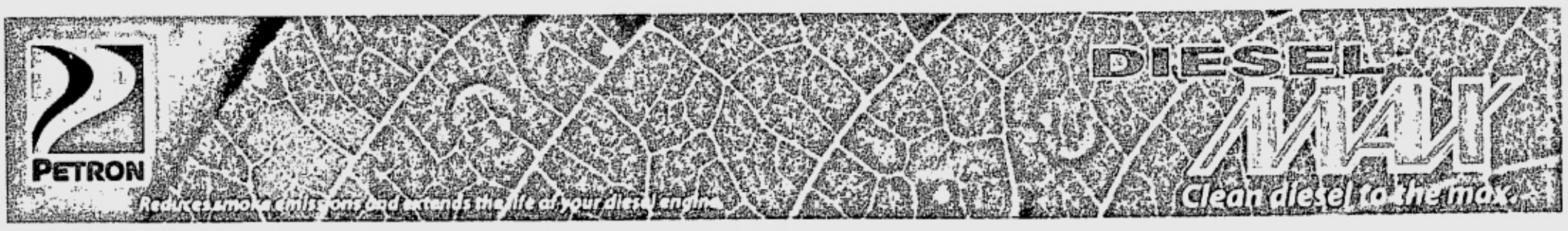

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Heavy spending before polls seen

BAGUIO CITY—Margarito Teves, president of Land Bank of the Philippines, predicted that P6-10 billion would be spent in the last four months before the May 2004 elections.

This money is enough to establish small and medium enterprises in the country, he said.

Addressing the Association of Government Auditors of the Philippines at the Baguio Country Club last week, Teves said the political campaign and the May elections would "exert a heavy drag on business sentiments."

"Historically speaking, politicians will be spending from P6 billion to P10 billion for the elections. If you think about it, this amount is enough to create jobs. Instead, the spending

HEAVY/ B8

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MBC 2003 policy report

MINDANAO ONE

Joji Ilagan-Bian

VARIOUS activities were conducted in line with the Mindanao Business Council's ongoing advocacy concerns. The MBC policy unit has adopted a graduated approach to its various policy concerns, with a number of issues being given by the MBC direct and focused advocacy effort, another set being relegated to advocacy partnerships, and the last, termed "resolution driven," being acted mainly due to the strength of policy resolutions forwarded.

Policy resolutions forwarded: The policy unit was able to effectively transmit MBC's policy agenda through the following major events:

a 12th Mindanao Business Conference
b. 5th Mindanao Food Congress
c. 29th Philippine Business Conference
d. 5th National Tuna Congress
e. 1st Mindanao Halal Forum
f. 1st National Conference on Halal Food and Non-Food Products
g. 2nd Mindanao HRSD Summit
h. National Mining Conference

Major advocacy concerns: The MBC has undertaken a number of direct advocacy efforts for a select number of policy issues and concerns. The following are the status updates on such efforts: (The latest comprehensive update and status report on the MBC policy agenda will be released by February 2004.)

a. Lowering sea transport cost through Ro-ro: Stemming from the 11th MinBizCon's resolution policy number 2002-01, "A resolution calling the government to expedite the implementation of action measures to lower sea transport costs," the MBC has been pushing for the establishment of a Road Roll-On Roll-Off Terminal System (RRTS) in accordance with the action plan adopted by the working panel for agriculture and rural development during the National Socio-Economic summit of December 2001.

The issuance of Executive Order 170, "Promoting private sector participation in the development and operation of the Road Roll-on/ Roll-off Terminal System," and the establishment of the Strong Republic Nautical Highway (SRNH) were considered by the MBC as a major policy win.

As a follow through to the MBC's existing advocacy on the implementation of Ro-Ro services, the MBC policy unit participated in the drafting of EO 170's implementing rules and regulations.

The MBC has called for the expansion of coverage of the Philippine Port Authority's MC 17-2003, a memorandum circular stipulating fixed tariff rates for Ro-Ro ports in the SRNH, to include all Ro-Ro ports nationwide, so that all of these ports may get a fixed tariff rate and eliminate additional fees on arrastre and stevedoring. The PPA has yet to respond to this recommendation.

The MBC has also been continuously meeting with the Philippine Inter-island Shipping Association (Pisa), the GEM Infrastructure Team and the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (DCCCII) to come up with an effective program for the transportation of commodities using an intermodal system and consolidation of commodities.

b. Promotion of the Mindanao halal industry: The MBC, Muslim Business Forum (MBF) and ARMM Business Council (ABC) have made considerable headway in the advocacy to promote the Philippine halal Industry, with Mindanao as the production base.

As part of its advocacy for Resolution 7 of the 4th Mindanao Food Congress, the MBC joined the MEDCo-sponsored Inter-agency Consultation for the Mindanao halal industry on Feb. 5, 2003.

The MBC has officially pushed for the creation and participation in a Mindanao halal industry task force. In lieu of the task force, the MBC has coordinated with the MEDCo in creating a TWG composed of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which shall focus on developing the industry.

A proposal will be submitted to the DA to fund the operations of a Mindanao Halal Industry Board.

Upon the establishment and start of operations of the proposed Mindanao Halal Industry Board (slated on January 2004), the MBC shall have achieved one of its key result indicators for this advocacy.

The MBC has officially transmitted its comments on House Bill 4068, entitled "An Act Establishing General Guidelines for Use of the Term 'Halal' and Instituting the Comprehensive and Integrated Philippine Halal Certification and Accreditation System for Food and Other Product Exports, Providing Funds Thereof and for Other Purposes," authored by Congressman Hussin U. Amin (Sulu, 1st District). Efforts are being exerted to have the House of Representatives pass this bill prior to the end of the 12th Congress.

c. Promotion and revitalization of the mineral exploration and mining Industry in Mindanao: Under its overarching program, "Countering Conflict with Business," the MBC has identified the mineral exploration and mining industry as a potential industry to spur economic growth in the region. A major concern for the mining industry in Mindanao is its moribund state, reflected by poor investment in the exploration stage. Key recommendations were forwarded in the 11th and 12th Mindanao Business Conferences to promote and fast-track exploration investment in Mindanao.

On the issue of transferring of functions relative to mining and mineral development to Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has already devolved and decentralized key functions to the MGB, including review and issuance of permits to the regional offices of the MGB.

The DENR-MGB has committed to review the MBC's 12th Minbizcon policy recommendations for the modification of mining permit applications in Mindanao, such as the creation of Reconnaissance Permits (as a precursor to Exploratory Permits). Likewise, Secretary Gozun of the DENR has committed to seriously study the proposal to restructure the

MINDANAO/ B7

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PLDT

From page B1

AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan said positive sentiments over economic prospects this year should help maintain the upbeat mood for the medium to long term.

"Judging from the lack of a strong sell-off, the market is trying to establish a new base. With the economy revving up and corporate earnings on the mend, all signs point to another bullish 2004," Vistan said. He said a number of trends from last year were likely to carry over into 2004 such as the benign inflation and interest rates which should provide incentives for investors to put money into equities given the meager yields from money market accounts.

"Political uncertainties will hound the market during the first half of the year. However, it may not likely have a strong impact on the markets as investors have learned to adapt to political developments," Vistan said.

BPI Securities agreed that market optimism had not waned after the strong start during the year. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Italian job 2

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

OUR ambassador to Italy, Philippe Lhuillier, was supposed to fly back to Rome yesterday but had to indefinitely postpone the trip after being asked to report to the Department of Foreign Affairs today.

Lhuillier is scheduled to see Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert to explain the 40-foot container van of "second-hand" Italian furniture he shipped into the country mid-year last year.

Albert has summoned Lhuillier, whose family owns a string of pawnshops bearing his name as well as the Oceanic boutique of fancy European household items, after receiving an investigation report from Malacañang saying that the shipment had been facilitated using spurious Philippine Embassy documentation.

Lhuillier vigorously denied the allegation that he had brought the shipment, which he described as consisting of "religious junk" he had acquired from various flea markets, duty-free.

Lhuillier also claimed that:

- He imported and shipped the 40-foot container van, whose contents had a declared value of $6,000, in his own personal capacity, despite official communications to the foreign shipper using the official stationery of the Embassy of the Philippines in Rome.
- He paid $1,900 for the sea freight, but took no insurance cover since, in addition to being "religious junk," the shipment also consisted of "assorted broken household furniture."
- He paid a total of P32,206 in import duty and VAT to the Philippine Bureau of Customs. In addition, Lhuillier also paid his customs broker, Oriental Pilipinas, P140,000 to facilitate the release of the shipment out of the Port Area.
- The entire furniture had all been stashed inside the van without the benefit of packing and crating, contrary to the official declaration that the questioned shipment consisted of 170 "packages."

The shipment was, at various documents, described either as "used furniture" or "p effects."

- It was his first and only importation from Italy ever since his appointment, his first diplomatic assignment, by President Estrada.

After the shipment had been released from Port Area, the container was delivered to 103 University Drive, Ayala Alabang, instead of the Dasmariñas Village address of Lhuillier, according to the brokerage delivery receipt.

Lhuillier said he was planning to use some of the furniture for a chapel, adding that he wants to join Opus Dei after failing to become a La Salle brother.

According to a former diplomat-friend of Lhuillier, a portion of the suspect shipment had also been consigned to a newspaper publisher.

No new models

THERE will be no new models this year from the three leading Japanese car assemblers, who would rather wait until after the May elections and the economic and investment climate becomes clearer.

Instead of new models, there will be a few improved variants of the existing lineup, such as for the 1.8-liter Corolla Altis (the 2004 version now has front and back sensors for parking, among other improvements) that were introduced by Toyota this weekend.

Honda, in the meantime, is set to introduce this week a two-liter engine version of its popular Civic.

Heard through the grapevine

HENRY Sy Sr. continues to scoop up Chinabank shares from the market, no matter how small the lot may be.

As of end December, the taipan's direct and indirect stake in Chinabank had inched up to 30.344 percent of the bank, up from 29.44 percent from the previous month.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.

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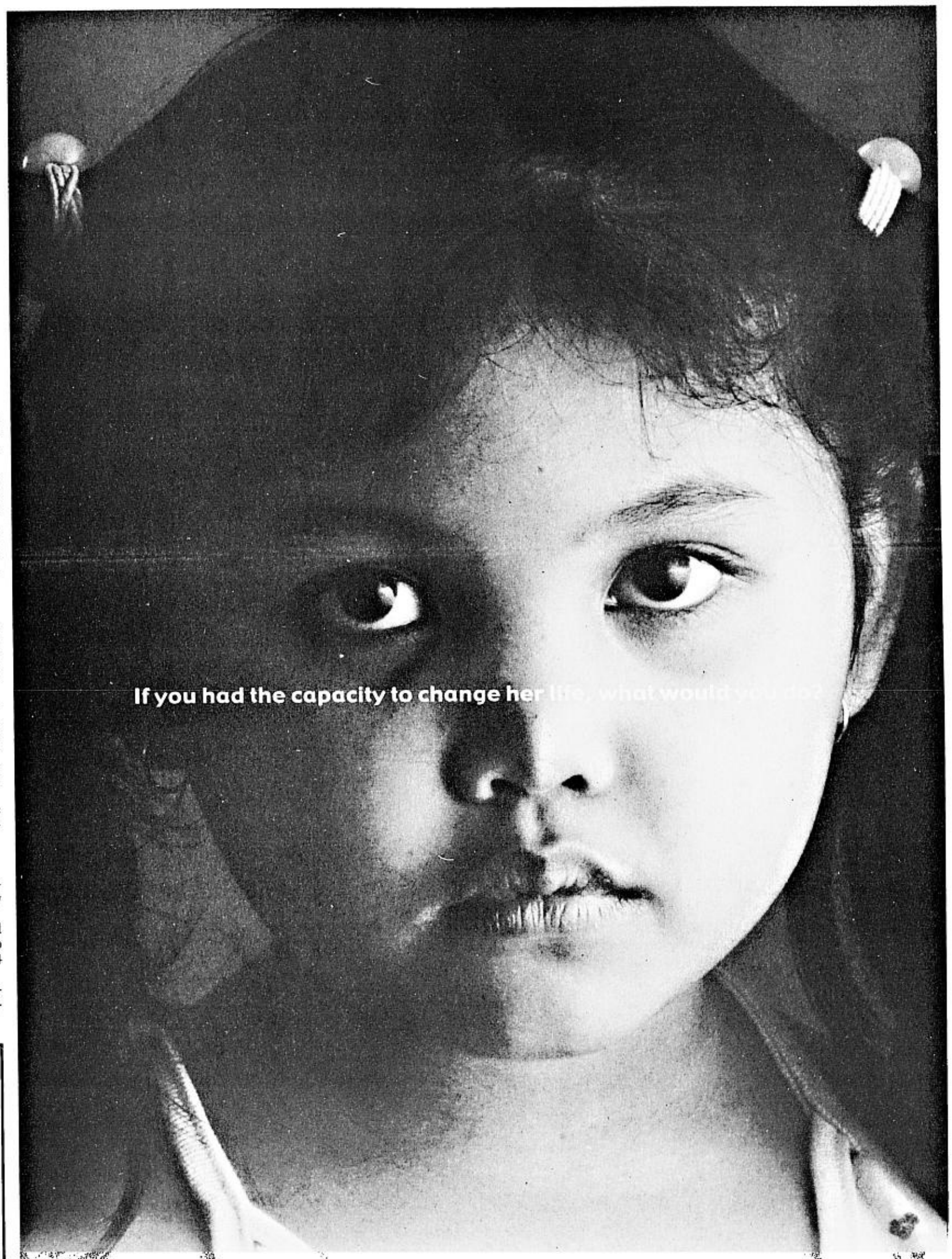

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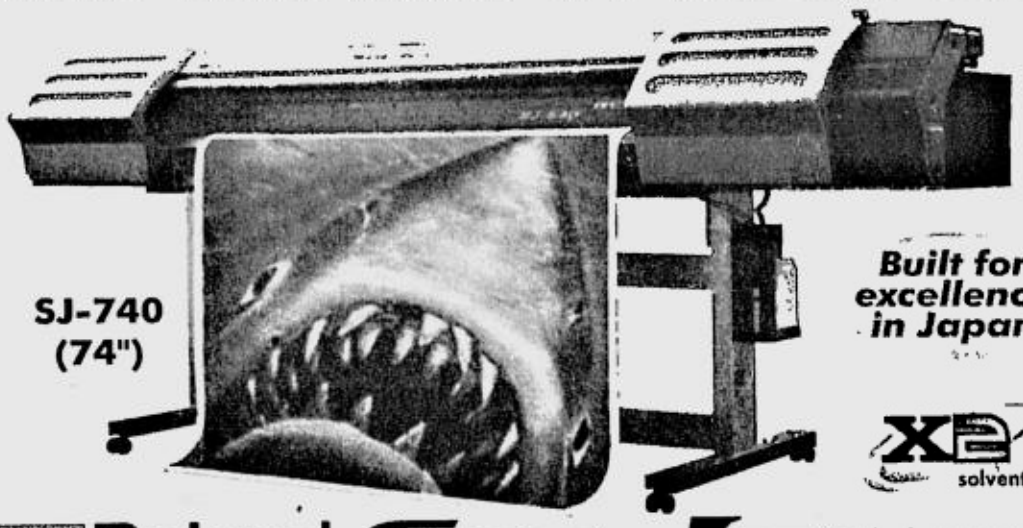

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The SSS: The single biggest money loss ever

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE BIG story on the SSS nowadays is the sale of its 29-percent stake in Equitable PCI Bank to Henry Sy. At P43 per share, the sale comes up to some P8 billion. There is a down payment of P1 billion cash. To cover the P7 billion balance, Henry Sy promises to pay, at about 10 percent interest compounded annually, P13 billion in one lump sum at the end of six and a half years. The promissory note is backed by government securities.

I am prepared to grant that this is the best deal the SSS could swing in order to get out of a very deep hole. But, there is no escaping the fact that the deal is simply the single biggest money loss in the SSS history.

Now, for the background. In mid-1999, the SSS scraped up P7.5 billion to help Equitable buy PCI. The resulting merged bank—Equitable PCI—was listed at P97 per share.

Right after the listing, the market price of the shares started dropping. The SSS foolishly decided to prop up the price by buying more shares. Naturally, the SSS, with all its vaunted resources, could not keep on with its buying spree. By the time the SSS finally gave up, it had raised its initial investment of P7.5 billion to P16 billion. It was of little comfort that the average price of the total holdings was down to P86 per share.

To raise the original P7.5 billion, the SSS borrowed from the short-term market. This was probably the first time in world history that a social security system borrowed short-term money. Social security systems do not borrow, certainly not from the short-term market; they are in the business of lending money. When the short-term loan was due, the SSS cleared it by selling off its inventory of prime securities, such as Ayala, San Miguel, PLDT and Meralco.

Like any institutional investor, the SSS was supposed to follow the so-called stop-loss rule. This rule says that, if the market price of a share drops a certain number of percentage points in a week, that share has to be unloaded. In other words, stop the loss, take it on the chin and run for dear life. But, even when Equitable/PCI share price continued to slide (it eventually hit rock bottom at below P30 per share), the SSS held on.

The Philippine Association of Retired Persons sued a bunch of SSS officials for grave misconduct. But Ombudsman Disierto, just before his retirement, dismissed the case. A motion for reconsideration is pending.

Now, Henry Sy is the great white knight who has come to save the maiden fair from a castle dark. He has bought the holdings for P8 billion, in installments. But since the SSS originally paid P16 billion for those shares, the SSS lost, though no fault of Sy's I hasten to add, a whopping P8 billion on the deal. It is the single biggest money loss in all of the SSS history.

During the five-year slide of the shares, the SSS insisted there was no loss. True enough, because the books continued to carry the shares at original acquisition cost. If loss there was, the SSS said, it was only a paper loss or an unrealized loss. Now, the unrealized has suddenly become realized. What new sorcery will be invoked to massage the books?

What does this loss mean to the members? Remember that assets are built from the contributions of members. By law, these contributions, plus earnings, are to be paid back to the members in the form of death, disability and retirement benefits.

But the assets have been battered these past few years. From year-end 2000 to September 2003, assets dropped from P182 billion to P150 billion. This additional P8-billion loss further cuts down assets to P142 billion, a total drop since December 2000 of a crippling P40 billion.

In manufacturing, a drop in assets results in a corresponding drop in liabilities. Let us say a factory is taken over by a bank to pay for a bad loan. The owner no longer owns the factory, but he also no longer owes the bank.

At the SSS, the assets are entirely independent of liabilities. While the assets have been cut, the liabilities have not gone, and will never go, down by even a single centavo. Because, members will continue to die, get disabled or retire.

In due time, all the losses in assets, including the latest P8 billion, will have to be paid out to members in the form of death, disability and retirement benefits. Unless the money lost is somehow recovered or replaced, the SSS will run out of money. The SSS has been saying officially that it would run out of money by 2015. With this most recent P8-billion loss, the end is nearer than 2015. *(More next week.)*

Ispat unit improves offer for Nat'l Steel

By Michelle V. Remo

GLOBAL Infrastructure Holdings Ltd. (GIHL), which is vying to acquire mothballed National Steel Corp., has agreed to shorten to eight years, from 10 years, the payment period for its P13.25-billion offer.

This was one of the improvements made by GIHL in its offer to convince NSC's creditor-banks to award the steel firm to the company.

The shortening of the payment period was one of the major points raised by creditor-banks in their 90-day exclusive negotiation with GIHL.

GIHL's improved offer includes the purchase price of P12.25 billion to be paid within eight years and an upfront cash payment of P1 billion, or a total of P13.25 billion. Also, it will invest another $25 million to be poured into the company in the first two years of its operations.

GIHL, a subsidiary of the Ispat Group of India, is expected to bag the right over NSC as most of the creditor-banks have already given their approval to the improved offer.

Land Bank of the Philippines president Margarito Teves earlier said only two of the creditor-banks have yet to give their approval to GIHL's offer.

NSC's creditor-banks include: Philippine National Bank, Land Bank of the Philippines, United Overseas Bank, Allied Bank, Asian Bank, Bank of Commerce, China Bank, Credit Agricole,Wise Citco, Equitable-PCI Bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., Traders Royal Bank and United Coconut Planters Bank.

The creditor-banks are given until Jan. 15 to decide on GIHL's offer, said Teves. Should the creditor-banks approve GIHL's offer by then, the deal will be signed within the following two weeks, he added.

GIHL won in November the right for a 90-day exclusive negotiation with creditor-banks after its original bid price of P11.905 billion bested the P7 billion plus profit-sharing offered by LNM Holdings N.V., the only other bidder.

LNM general manager Eric Tiere earlier said LNM would be willing to negotiate with the NSC creditor-banks should GIHL fail to sign an agreement with them within the exclusivity period.

Pasar revenue up 50%

PHILIPPINE Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. (Pasar), the sole copper smelting and refining firm in the country, registered a 50-percent revenue growth in the first 11 months of 2003 largely due to improved production.

Pasar, which is 90-percent owned by Glencore International of Switzerland, said in a statement that production of anode (unrefined copper) increased by 40 percent as of November to 206,874 metric tons, from 148,079 metric tons in the same period last year.

Production of cathode or refined copper, meanwhile, jumped 20 percent to 155,914 metric tons from 130,699 metric tons.

The cathodes produced by Pasar are among the country's top exports. Cathodes are used in the manufacture of electronics products.

The company's sales of gold and silver also increased in the 11-month period. Gold sales stood at 11,767 kilograms, or 16 percent higher than the 10,160 kilograms sold in the previous year. Silver sales increased by 11 percent to 38,682 kilograms from 34,988 kilograms in 2002.

Sales of sulphuric acid hit 453,322 metric tons during the January-November period, or 46 percent higher than the 309,961 metric tons produced and sold during the same period in 2002.

Pasar earlier disclosed its plan to invest over P800 million to expand its capacity.

From the current 168,500 metric tons per year, Pasar intends to increase its production capacity by 31,500 metric tons to 200,000 metric tons per year.

The company said the entry of Glencore into Pasar provided an additional investment of P2.6 billion and significantly helped in the improvement of the firm's production activities. *Michelle V. Remo*

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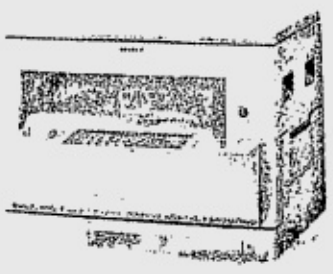

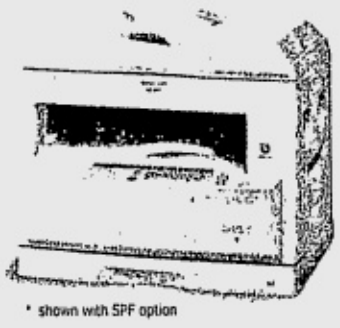

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NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

ALMOST everyday these days, someone asks me the question, "Is there hope for the country?" The level of pessimism about our country's future among many people I meet, including among this column's responding readers, seems rather high, for reasons that are understandable. Some readers were skeptical about statements made in some of my recent columns, in effect questioning my relative optimism about the country's economic future. One statement that drew such reaction was my assertion that people who threaten to leave the country in the face of our uncertain political future may only be contributing to our problem, and that what we need right now is nationalism, defined as oneness as a nation.

Bailing out

Some readers described to me their own personal frustrations and experiences that have led them to make the move. It is hard to blame those who out of direct personal experience either as direct victims of crime, injustice or economic hardship have decided to escape their miseries in this country and cast their lot in a foreign land.

But what bothers me is that many of those who threaten to leave the country, and thus have the means to travel and migrate abroad, are obviously not the ones worst hit by our economic difficulties. It is, rather, the large numbers of the poor around us, most of whom cannot even dream of travelling abroad, much less move there for good. One particular reader's exasperation captures their plight: *"Simula ng ipinanganak ako dito sa bansang ito, wala na akong naranasang kaginhawaan sa buhay, kahit anong pagsisikap ko wala! Nagtitipid ka na, magtipid pa rin daw; mataas na ang bilihin, tataasan pang lalo; tinapakan ka na, ibabaon ka pa sa lupa. Habang buhay na lang ba tayong ganito? Huwag sana ... at sana kung mabubuhay man akong muli hindi na sana ako dito ipanganak—sawang-sawa na ako!"* People like her can only think of migrating to a foreign country in a future life!

Indeed, those who have the resources to migrate are arguably in a better position to contribute to making things better. Some probably contribute to the very social injustices described above, and that they themselves also lament.

Keeping faith

On the other hand, another reader points out that some global trends hold much promise for the Philippines, giving us good reason to believe that the country has a bright economic future—provided we take good advantage of these trends. Three such trends he cites are global labor arbitrage, the re-emergence of resource-based industries, and declining population in industrialized countries.

The first refers to the way rich countries are now projected to export millions of jobs to developing countries, particularly in the form of jobs in backroom and technology services. Our reader writes: "While India may be today's top absorber of such jobs, high value services such as stock research, project management, underwriting and forecasting are the next level in the chain of jobs that are being exported from high-cost structure countries to low-cost structure emerging markets. We are witnessing growth in levels of business processes outsourced to our country, such as call centers."

He further notes that the opening up of the two formerly closed economies of China and India has spurred an immense demand for resource-based products. As China shapes up to be the factory of the world and India as the backroom of the world, their current growth levels have caused a major realignment in global trade. Most of the rest of Asia's exports to the US are shifting to feed China's manufacturing and consumer demands, causing a rapid growth in commodity prices, such as gold, silver, copper, platinum, nickel and other precious metals, apart from soybeans, cotton, lumber, cattle, and yes, our pineapples and bananas. The Philippines is actually benefiting from China's dynamism, and now enjoys a trade surplus with that country.

The third trend our reader cites is the way Europe and Japan project declines in their population, which, while posing a long-term threat to their economies, holds great promise for labor-surplus economies like ours. Our government should identify niches in the said population-declining countries and gear our human resources development programs to meet these demands, particularly in aging-related services.

'Panibagong Paraan'

Apart from a generally positive outlook due to global trends, the other reason we ought to keep faith is the fact that so many good things are actually happening in the Philippine countryside. I have been requested to be one of the jurors in the World Bank's Development Innovation Marketplace (dubbed "Panibagong Paraan") just concluded last Saturday, and experiences like this can be heartwarming indeed. Having similarly judged entries in the recent Gawad Galing Pook and the League of Cities Best Practices awards, one cannot but be inspired by the wellspring of wonderful initiatives being taken by local governments, NGOs and business working in partnership to provide a better life to the nation's poor. If we just highlight the many good things happening down below and not be overwhelmed by the political noise happening at the top, we can all have better basis for keeping faith in our economy and in our country.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

RP faces removal from CalPERS list

By Clarissa S. Batino

ASIDE from an expected downgrade by ratings firm Moody's Investors Service, the Philippines also faces a possible removal from the investment list of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, the United States' biggest pension fund.

Moody's will decide on the country's rating in the third week of this month while CalPERS usually releases the list of its permissible investment sites in early February. A downgrade will raise the cost of government borrowing and weaken the peso while the CalPERS delisting can affect the surging local stock market.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said CalPERS' consultant, Wilshire Associates, had stubbornly refused to correct the inaccuracies in its scoring system for the Philippines.

The Philippines had argued, in a comprehensive reply sent to Wilshire and CalPERS last year, that the scoring had at least nine instances of inaccuracies and seven cases of inconsistencies.

While the influential US pension fund had placed only about $30 million in Philippine stocks, its investment decision affects those of other investors. CalPERS manages about $133 billion in assets, of which $1.8 billion is in emerging markets.

Corazon Guidote, executive director of the Investor Relations Office, said that without the corrections, the country would continue to suffer very low marks and would be removed from the list for the third straight time because it could not meet the minimum score required by CalPERS.

"The bias of Wilshire is just too strong. We have tried hard to convince them that they rated us based on certain incorrect information that they failed to recognize," she noted.

Wilshire Associate's managing director Rosalind Hewsenian had rebuffed the government's efforts to discuss the scoring system, Guidote said.

"It is clear that they (Wilshire) won't listen to reason and make the necessary corrections. We were just trying to point out the shortcomings in the review," Buenaventura said.

Since 2002, CalPERS, upon the recommendation of Wilshire, had stricken the Philippines from its list of permissible investment sites but the government had managed to convince the influential pension fund to defer any action. Last year, CalPERS gave the country a one-year curing period to address the deficiencies and work out its differences with Wilshire Associates.

"Hopefully, the impact of a Moody's downgrade and a removal from CalPERS' list would not be severe. Anyway, a downgrade by a notch is already discounted while a two-notch cut in the rating is speculative," Guidote said.

A top government official, however, said that Moody's might cut the Ba1 rating two notches down before it would revise its outlook to "stable" from "negative." A one-step downgrade may not be enough. If this happens, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Rating would also review their current "BB" rating on the Philippines or place the "stable" outlook on the rating to "negative."

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Gov't to entice existing investors to stay put

By Michelle V. Remo

NEWLY appointed Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima said keeping existing investors in the country and encouraging them to infuse more capital would be one of his banner programs during his six-month stint at the Department of Trade and Industry.

Purisima, who will act as DTI chief only until June 30 unless reappointed by the next president, said he intended to work on the concerns of local industries to encourage them to continue doing business here.

"We need to help them deal with their problems to make them invest more. Investment retention is a good form of investment promotion," he said in a press briefing on Friday.

Purisima, who replaced Manuel Roxas II who is vying for a senatorial seat, cited the semiconductor and electronics industry's concern on the high cost of electricity and poor infrastructure in the country.

He said giving enough support to the electronics and semiconductor sector, which is the country's biggest dollar earner, was vital to economic development.

He added that the DTI would work with other concerned government agencies that may help address concerns of local industries.

Purisima said that over the next six months, the trade department would work on building relationships with the country's businessmen, who are seen to be waiting for the next administration to step in before pursuing more investment initiatives.

"I'm excited that after June 30, the political cloud will be gone and more investors will take a look at us. I'm sure that after six months, some of them might come in," he said.

Continuing efforts to develop the country's small and medium enterprises, which is included in the economic agenda of President Macapagal-Arroyo, will be part of the DTI's action plans in promoting investments.

Purisima said he would introduce the "big brother, small brother" concept, in which large companies will be asked to assist small ones to help the latter develop.

Prior to his appointment to the DTI, Purisima served in the private sector as chair of the auditing firm SGV and Co.

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Australian exchange seeking minority equity stake in PSE

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE AUSTRALIAN Stock Exchange, the second biggest equity exchange in the Asia-Pacific region, is in talks with the Philippine Stock Exchange on a possible strategic investment in the latter, a local bourse official said.

The PSE official told the INQUIRER that AUX, which pioneered the demutualization trend among stock exchanges across the globe, has expressed interest to acquire a minority stake in the PSE.

The AUX and the Philippines-Australia Governance Facility earlier provided technical assistance to the PSE, which was mandated to likewise shed its mutual status by the Securities Regulation Code of 2000.

The official said the PSE was in talks with different bourses that were keen on becoming a strategic partner, but said nothing had been firmed up so far. The official added that the talks were in varying levels of progress but the discussions with AUX were among the most advanced.

It was earlier reported that the Singapore Stock Exchange had likewise offered to acquire a minority stake in the PSE.

"It is possible that there will be more than one strategic partner," the official said.

However, the PSE would still have to seek exemption from the 5-percent restriction on beneficial ownership of its shares to make a stocks offering attractive to strategic investors.

The SRC, the new securities law which was passed after the BW Resources Corp. price manipulation scandal, also slaps a 20-percent limit on any single industry owning shares of the PSE. This means that the PSE's member-brokers, which now control 100 percent of voting shares, would have to brace for an 80-percent dilution.

As part of the mandated demutualization process, the PSE has converted from a non-stock to a stock corporation two years ago and issued shares to member-brokers. The process is not complete, however, without the dilution of shares held by the broker-stockholders.

Last month, the PSE was listed by way of introduction, or without any public offering.

The possible entry of AUX, which is second only to Tokyo as the biggest stock exchange in Asia-Pacific, is seen to further benefit the PSE in terms of technical expertise.

The AUX has a market capitalization of more than $530 billion. Its trading day spans the close of business in the United States and the opening in Europe.

Also, Australia is the largest share-owning country in the world, with almost 54 percent of the adult population owning stocks in publicly listed companies.

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,200,000/1,250,000*	1,150,000
Baguio Country Club	700,000	600,000
Canyon Woods	160,000	100,000
Camp John Hay	-	200,000
Capitol Hills	170,000	150,000
Calatagan Golf Club A/B**	70,000/Pls. Call	
Cebu Country Club	-	1,230,000
Celebrity Sports Club	180,000	155,000
Club Filipino	150,000	-
Eaglerdge A/B*/C**	300,000/450,000**	-
Eastridge A/B*	-	70,000/100,000*
Evercrest	80,000	-
Fontana D/C*/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	190,000/220,000*/250,000**	190,000*
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	10,000,000/11,500,000*	9,450,000
Manila Polo	-	2,250,000
Manila Yacht Club	550,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	410,000/600,000*	500,000*
Metropolitan Club	100,000	-
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	150,000	110,000/250,000*
Mt. Malagayat Ind./Corp.*	220,000/300,000*	-
Phil. Columbian	65,000	-
Puerto Azul A/B	100,000/150,000*	-
Quezon City Sports Club A	180,000	-
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	140,000/150,000*/260,000**	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	330,000	-
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Sherwoods A/B*/C**	70,000/Pls. Call*	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,300,000/1,650,000*	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club (Corp.)	150,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	340,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	680,000	-
Tat Teligmas A	-	130,000
Valley Golf & CC	300,000	250,000
Wack-Wack Golf	Pls. Call	6,300,000

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BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	-	please call
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB "B"	60K	215K
CAMP JOHN HAY	-	-
CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB	180K	170K
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	-	-
EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "B"	110K	-
EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "B"	280K	-
FONTANA "D"	50K	please call
FOREST HILLS "B"	-	180K
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	200K	please call
MANILA GOLF CLUB (Ind.)	please call	9.7M
MANILA GOLF CLUB (Corp.)		10.8M
MANILA POLO CLUB		2.250M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	400K	350K
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	-	500K
MIMOSA (Ind.)	-	140K
MIMOSA C3	-	280K
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	150K	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	-	215K
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	-	220K
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	-	please call
ROCKWELL CLUB	350K	-
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	please call	-
RIVIERA GOLF CLUB	180K	-
SHERWOOD HILLS "B"	-	120K
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	-	1.1M
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	-	680K
VALLEY GOLF CLUB	250K	-
WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	7.2M	6.375M

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,100,000	1,300,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,300,000
Baguio Country Club	650,000	680,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Camp John Hay	200,000	220,000
Canlubang	400,000	450,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	140,000	160,000
Cebu Country Club	1,200,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	170,000	200,000
Club Filipino	-	175,000
Eaglerdge "A"	200,000	270,000
Eaglerdge "B"	200,000	280,000
Eaglerdge "C"	-	380,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	165,000	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	220,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	Please Call
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,000,000
Manila Polo	2,300,000	2,350,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	330,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	450,000	550,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	60,000	100,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	170,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	158,000	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	400,000
Puerto Azul	-	100,000
Quezon City Sports Club	Please Call	200,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	170,000	200,000
Spa & Lodge	-	800,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,000,000	1,250,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	200,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	300,000	340,000
Tagaytay Highlands	600,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	750,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	140,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	250,000
Valley Golf	250,000	280,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,300,000	7,100,000

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Taiwan group eyes strategic alliance with Banco de Oro

By Clarissa S. Batino

A TAIWANESE financial giant that had long wanted to invest in the local banking system through Equitable PCI Bank is reportedly exploring a strategic alliance with the Sy family's Banco de Oro.

BDO had entered into an agreement with the Social Security System for the purchase of the latter's 29-percent stake in the Equitable PCI.

A ranking government official said that the Fubon Group "is being rumored to be courting BDO for a strategic partnership" given the latter's impending entry as the biggest shareholder of Equitable PCI.

The president of another local bank said that there was talk that a Taiwanese group was backing up BDO's acquisition of the Equitable PCI shares.

BDO chair Teresita Sy-Coson said that the bank had not come into contact with the Fubon Group but said she would be willing to explore any alliance especially with a foreign giant.

Fubon Group is Taiwan's second-largest financial conglomerate. It has interests in banking, insurance and equities. Fubon Commercial Bank is 15-percent owned by Citigroup Inc.

"I would welcome it if they get in touch with us. I am open to many things including an alliance," said Sy, daughter of retailing tycoon Henry Sy.

BDO is paying P14 billion or P43.50 each for the Equitable PCI shares it would acquire from the SSS. It would pay the pension fund a P1-billion installment once the deal is signed and the rest would be paid with zero coupon promissory notes maturing in six-and-a-half years.

The Fubon Group is one of the parties interested in buying Equitable PCI in 2001 when the bank suffered from massive withdrawals due to the account of Jose Velarde, an alias allegedly used by former President Estrada. The bank needed fresh capital after its deposit base went down substantially.

But the Go family refused to give up its stake or be diluted so the bank rebuffed buy-in proposals and instead tapped the financial market to raise the so-called tier-two capital.

The SSS became the biggest stakeholder in Equitable PCI in 1999 when the Estrada administration allowed the use of the state-owned pension funds to help the Go family of Equitable Bank acquire a controlling 72 percent in PCIBank for P32 billion.

The pension fund bought the shares in Equitable PCI at more than P90 each.

DEAL SIGNED IN HAWAII

PLDT, AT&T end rates row

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER an almost year-long dispute, industry giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. finally signed on Saturday an interim termination rate agreement with American carrier AT&T Corp.

PLDT is the third Philippine carrier to sign such an agreement with AT&T, following the dispute between two American carriers and six local telecommunications firms in early 2003.

The INQUIRER last week reported that PLDT and AT&T were expecting an agreement to be signed "within the next couple of days" as negotiations between them had been progressing quite well.

PLDT senior vice president Alfredo Panlilio, who was involved in the discussions, said the agreement between the two carriers was signed in Hawaii.

Since February last year, AT&T and another American carrier, MCI International, had been in a tiff with PLDT over termination rates.

Termination rates are charges that an originating carrier pays for the completion of its subscribers' calls on a foreign carrier's network.

The dispute stemmed from the decision of six local carriers—PLDT, Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc., Bayan Telecommunications Inc., and Subic Telecom—to raise termination rates to 12 US cents a minute from 8 US cents for landline calls and to 16 US cents a minute from 12 US cents for mobile phone calls.

The telecommunications firms' disagreement even reached the level of the US Federal Communications Commission through a case filed by AT&T and MCI against the six Philippine carriers.

AT&T and MCI accused the six local firms of whipsawing, or pitting US carriers against each other to get better deals.

The FCC's International Bureau ruled in favor of the American carriers by issuing a stop-payment order against the Philippine companies on March 10.

The National Telecommunications Commission then allowed local carriers to block calls coming from its non-paying US counterparts two days later.

But on Oct. 17, the NTC lifted this order, paving the way for the resumption of negotiations between the US and Philippine carriers, on the premise that direct connection between them would be restored.

MVP calls for strengthening of ethics in gov't, business

PLDT president and CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan has called on Filipinos across all levels of society to "fulfill our civic and ethical responsibility" to examine the values and candidates of major candidates for elective office in the 2004 national elections.

In a speech delivered Jan. 8 to mark the formal launch of the Governor Jose B. Fernandez Ethics Center at the Ateneo de Manila University, Pangilinan said: "The sensitivity to the matter of ethics is opportune, considering that national elections will be held in just four months. The issue of ethics—and the values that inform the ethics of our candidates—must be central in the minds of our voters."

The Ethics Center is the first dedicated, post-graduate center in the nation devoted to the fostering of better ethical practices among a new generation of government and business leaders.

"Each nation possesses a set of ethical norms that co-exist with that nation's economic components. This ethical wealth, or poverty, as the case may be, has a perceptible correlation with a country's material wealth. In other words, a country that is morally poor is likely to be also materially poor," said Pangilinan, referring to the need to strengthen ethical behaviors and standards across all sectors of society.

Pangilinan also challenged the next generation of government and business leaders, by saying "a more equitable income distribution will enhance economic efficiency and productivity—while the current inequity—as evidenced by the widening gap between rich and poor, only dampens incentive and misallocates resources. Corruption heightens inequity, because it raises prices, lowers the quality of goods and services, and inflicts the greatest damage on the poor."

In light of major business scandals that have erupted across the international community in recent years—the latest being the Parmalat scandal in Europe, Pangilinan noted that "the one true secret I have learned about business is that when it comes to success, there is no secret, no mystery, and no myths. Success only springs from old-fashioned values—values that transcend the context and circumstance of time. Values as basic as being honest and truthful, working hard and playing fair, and seeking no ill will toward one's fellow man."

Pangilinan offered how First Pacific Co. Ltd., the Hong Kong-based conglomerate, has been long set a standard for values based and ethically guided management.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 9, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	11,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	18	18	17.75	17.75	23,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49	50.5	49	50	1,200,600
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	4,110
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	39.5	38	38	385,300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.53	730,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28.5	27	28	1,605,300
Philippine National Bank	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	92,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	26,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	4,300
Security Bank Corp.	17	17	17	17	9,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	2,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1800	1800	1800	1800	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	850,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	199	199	199	199	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1395	1405	1395	1405	2,130
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26.5	97,80
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.72	0.76	0.72	0.73	10,820,00
Globe Telecom Inc.	980	990	960	980	151,26
Ipeople Inc.	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	667,00
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	300,00
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.97	1.06	0.97	1.06	24,270,00
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.18	0.22	0.18	0.22	400,00
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	975	1010	970	995	432,73
Ivantage Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	140,00
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	20,300,00
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.5	18.5	17.5	18.5	1,260,20
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	32	29	31.5	5,820,50
Petron Corp.	2.36	2.4	2.34	2.36	7,454,00
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	150,00
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	758,00
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	660,00
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	150,00
Union Cement Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	770,00
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3,00
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31	31	65,80
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.5	20.75	20	20.25	806,00
Swift Food Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	110,00
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55.5	54.5	55	157,50
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	68	65.5	66	690,00
Universal Robina Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	10,00
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	4,570,00
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,00
Ayala Corp.	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.8	10,005,00
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.5	3.75	3.5	3.7	5,168,00
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	500,00
A. Soriano Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	10,00
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5,000,00
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	30,00
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,00
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.57	0.62	0.57	0.61	31,040,00
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	60,00
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	400,00
Southeast Asian Cement	0.044	0.044	0.043	0.043	2,500,00
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,050,00
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	20.75	21.75	20.75	21.5	1,020,4
Ionics Inc.	1.48	1.6	1.48	1.6	817,0
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	215,0
Megaworld Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	6,065,0
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	9,800,0
Music Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	1,500,0
Prime Media Holdings Inc	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	20,0
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	300,0
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	50,0
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	37,0
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	7.2	7.2	7	7	16,0
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.55	3,300,0
Fairmont Holdings Inc	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	230,0
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,0
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,0
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25.5	26	25	26	1,820,1
PLDT (10%% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	
PLDT (10%% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	
PLDT (10%% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	
PLDT (10%% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,0
PLDT (10%% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.3	20,217,0
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	120,0
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	50,0
C & P Homes Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.17	0.17	450,0
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	550,0
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.215	1,660,0
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	9,501,0
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	490,0
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	90,0
Primex Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	40,0
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.5	27,772,0
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	100,0
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	6,000,0
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.23	2,600,0
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	4,590,0
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	9,000,0
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.008	58,000,0
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	12,000,0
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.43	400,0
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.45	1,780,0
OIL					
Imperial Res	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	500,0
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	1,000,0
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.0028	0.0028	42,000,0
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	70,000,0
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	60,0

CURRENCIES

January 9, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.783392	1.000000	55.233000
Japan	Yen	0.007380	0.009420	0.520300
United Kingdom	Pound	1.436506	1.833700	101.280800
Hongkong	Dollar	0.100915	0.128818	7.115000
Switzerland	Franc	0.638513	0.815062	45.018300
Canada	Dollar	0.612599	0.781983	43.191300
Singapore	Dollar	0.462315	0.590145	32.595500
Australia	Dollar	0.606575	0.774293	42.766500
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.078018	2.652590	146.510500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208899	0.266660	14.728400
Brunei	Dollar	0.460954	0.588408	32.499500
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000094	0.000120	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.020123	0.025687	1.418800
UAE	Dirham	0.213289	0.272264	15.038000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.276500	70.504900
Argentina	Peso	0.271539	0.346620	19.144900
Brazil	Real	0.275068	0.351124	19.393600
Denmark	Kroner	0.134258	0.171380	9.465800
India	Rupee	0.017236	0.022002	1.215200
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.206183	0.263193	14.536900
Mexico	New Peso	0.072103	0.092039	5.083600
New Zealand	Dollar	0.528640	0.674809	37.271700
Norway	Kroner	0.115680	0.147665	8.156000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013624	0.017391	0.960600
South Africa	Rand	0.117980	0.150602	8.318200
Korea	Won	0.000663	0.000846	0.046700
Sweden	Kroner	0.109950	0.140351	7.752000
Syria	Pound	0.017704	0.022599	1.248200
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023246	0.029674	1.639000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000491	0.000627	0.034600

INTEREST RATES

Jan. 09, 2004-MART1

Benchmark Interest Rates	Rates MART1 9-Jan-04	MART1 8-Jan-04
1 Month	6.4067	6.4017
3 Months	6.5125	6.5125
6 Months	7.9679	7.9625
1 Year	8.5054	8.4929
2 Years	9.27	9.26
3 Years	10.245	10.2683
4 Years	10.6679	10.6625
5 Years	11.0446	11.0483
7 Years	11.3482	11.33
10 Years	11.6018	11.6167
20 Years	12.0018	12.0167
25 Years	12.2964	12.2647

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

SPECIAL POWER UTILITIES GROUP PROJECTS

Napocor allots ₱14.8B for rural electrification

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NATIONAL Power Corp.'s Special Power Utilities Group (Spug) said it had earmarked P14.82 billion over the next five years to bring electricity to remote areas and islands that are not linked to main power grids across the nation.

Under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, Napocor would cease involvement in power generation and but would maintain electrification function in remote areas.

Napocor said funding for the Spug projects would come from the universal charge component meant for missionary electrification, which is part of electricity rates.

According to Napocor's missionary electrification development plan (MEDP) for 2004-2008, P9.62 billion of the five-year capital expenditures was earmarked for power-generation projects.

Of that amount, P7.3 billion would be used to increase the capacity of existing Napocor-Spug's projects by 219,268 kilowatts.

The remaining P2.32 billion would cover expenses for bringing power to at least 1,000 barangays that remain without electricity.

Napocor also plans to invest P2.77 billion to install some 919 circuit-kilometers of transmission lines and substations that have a capacity of 180 megavolt-amperes.

The power firm said another P2.43 billion would be allocated to operation expenses and to maintenance, rehabilitation and improvement of facilities and parts.

Estimates from the Department of Energy show that as of September 2003, a total of 5,409 barangays were still without electricity.

Of that number, 1,249 had been officially declared not economical to connect to main power grids and were thus included in the MEDP.

For 2004 alone, Napocor has set a capex of P2.87 billion—P1.75 billion for generation projects, P608.9 million for transmission projects and P509 million for operations.

Last week, NPC-Spug said it had named at least 10 rural electrification projects for possible funding by the Spanish government under the Spanish-Philippines Protocol.

Napocor recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Energy and Spain's Expansión Exterior, which is a state-firm that specializes in providing consultancy and financial structuring of projects on behalf of Spanish export companies.

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Mindanao One

From page B2

DENR to remove mineral resources development from its mandate and have such transferred to a proposed Department of Mineral Resources.

By January 2004, the Mindanao Metals and Minerals Council (MMMC) is expected to be established, to be composed of exploration and mining companies in Mindanao.

d. Increasing Air Linkages in Mindanao: Under its Strategic Initiatives for Travel Expansion (Site), the MBC has already transmitted its transit stop/cargo hub concept to the Davao City inter-agency task force for the DIA. Davao City has also procured multiple designation access to the Republic of Palau.

For General Santos City, the GSC-Manado route has recently been established. This paves the way for the proposed Haj Flight under the SITE.

For Zamboanga City, the planned Zamboanga-Sandakan route is still in the works. The MBC has been undertaking efforts to assist Layang-layang Aerospace (Malaysia) and Seair (RP) to establish the said route.

The DOTC has replied to the MBC's recommendation for a Mindanao representative to the Philippine Air Panel, stating that it has forwarded the matter to the Office of the President.

The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), for its part, has included in its 2004 work program preparing memoranda of agreement with Eaga countries for multiple airline designation, 5th freedom traffic rights in the growth area, increase in designated BIMP-Eaga points, and cooperative arrangements, like code-sharing.

e. Peace talks: The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (Opapp) has committed to study the key recommendations made by the MBC, foremost being the need for private sector representation in the GRP-MILF Negotiating Panel. This proposal has been pushed by the MBC in the 12th MinBizCon as a means for the Mindanao business community to ensure the pushing through of the GRP-MILF Peace Talks and Final Peace Agreement.

f. Power Crisis: The MBC policy unit met with the State Power Development Corp. (SPDC) to explore possible collaboration for advocacy on the use of Clean Coal Technology. Mr. Augusto Lopez-Dy, SPDC Vice President, informed the MBC that the SPDC could only commit in 2004.

The MBC policy unit also drafted a letter to Energy Secretary Vincent Perez, calling for measures to address the looming power crisis in Mindanao.

The MBC has forwarded to private sector representatives, such as DLPC Inc., Aidco, and Babcock-Hitachi Inc. its recommendations on mitigating the forecasted power crisis, which is part of the MBC's policy agenda. In lieu of public investment, the MBC aims to get more private sector investment in investing in power infrastructure.

g. HRSD: During the 2nd Mindanao HRSD Summit, the MBC entered into a Pact of Commitment with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) for a number of reforms and programs in the Techvoc sector, foremost being the need to operationalize the Dual Training System (DTS) and to pilot the DTS in all Mindanao regions.

The MBC is still waiting for a formal response from the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) if the Secretary of Labor can grant exemption to enterprises from paying 75 percent minimum wage to DTS trainees. The 75 percent minimum wage provision in the Labor Code of the Philippines remains a hindrance for companies to participate in the Tesda's DTS program, thereby, rendering the program ineffective in bridging the gap between Tech-Voc education and actual industry needs.

To help make TVET institutions and the Tesda to be more responsive to industry needs, the MBC has ensured the Mindanao implementation of the Philippines Australia Quality TVET (PAQTVET) Project, with the MBC chair elected by the project coordination committee as co-chair. The project aims to come up with standards and curricula based on actual industry requirements, as well as institutionalize Industry Working Groups nationwide, as well as in Mindanao, to provide for an industry-led TVET Sector.

(Ms Bian is a Mindanao business leader and deputy chair of the East Asean Business Council.)

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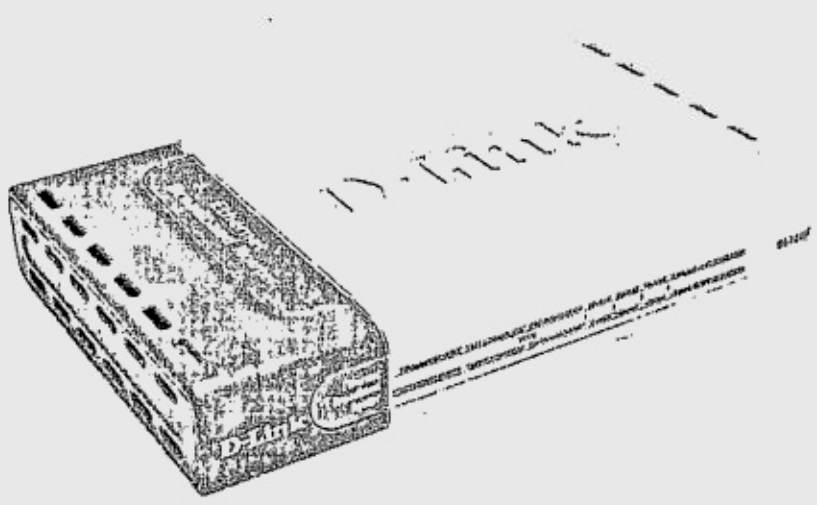

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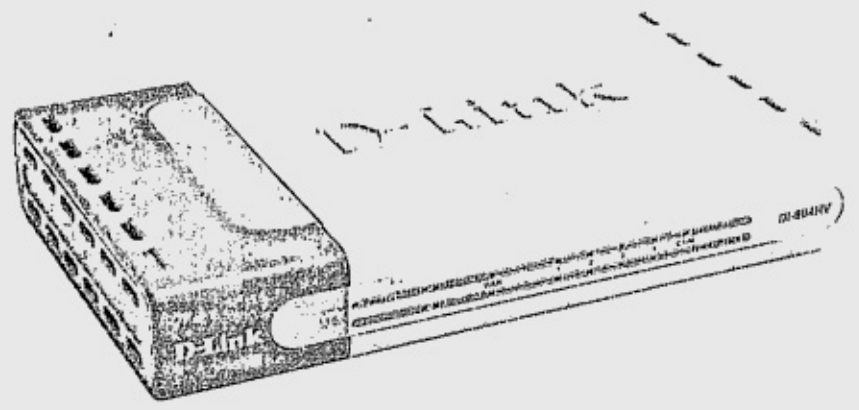

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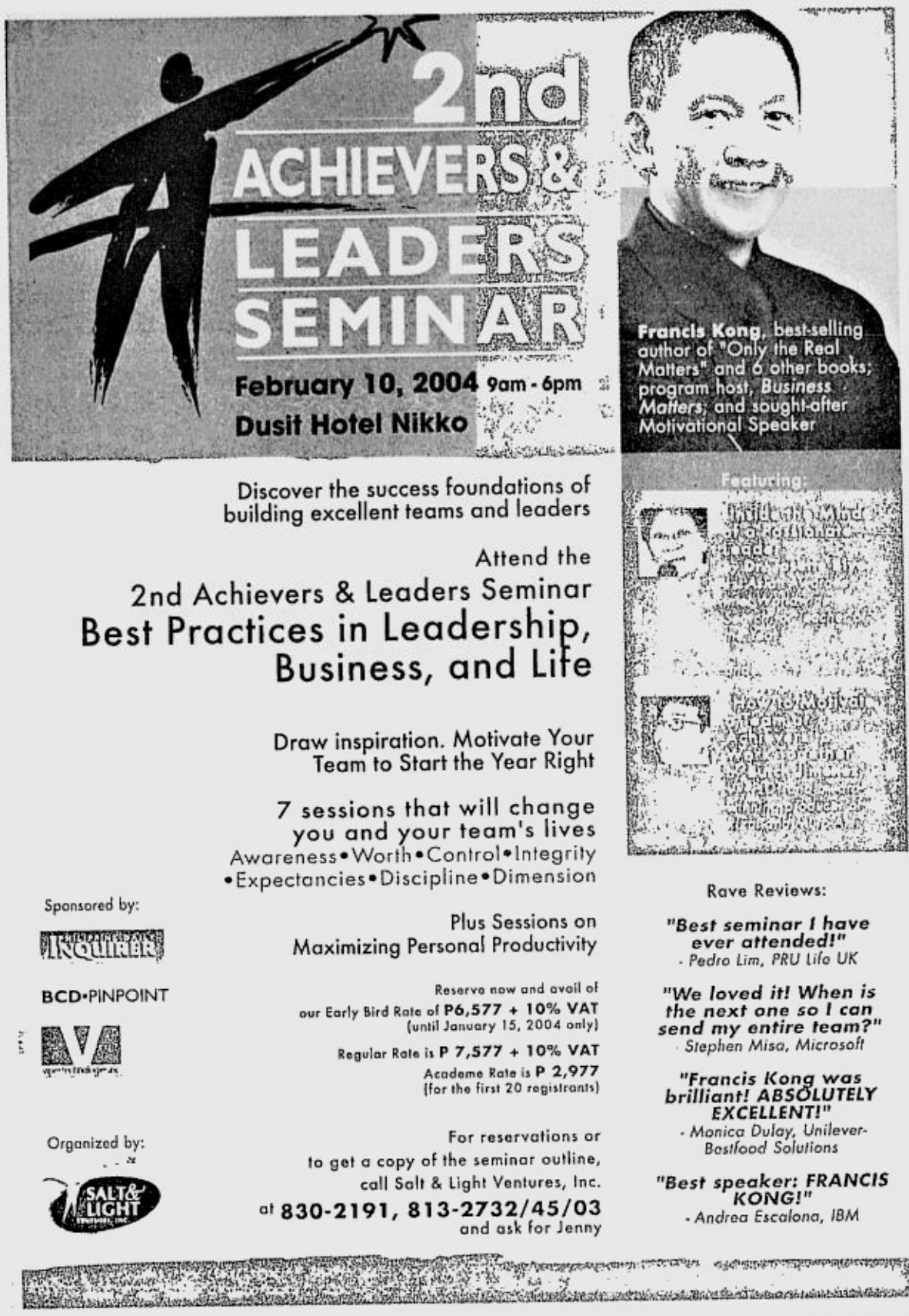

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Water shortage seen cutting rice output

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE COUNTRY'S quest for self-sufficiency in rice may not be achieved this year as the threat of a Luzon-wide water shortage is seen to cut down irrigation for major palay production areas.

"If the water supply further tightens here in Luzon, the first that has to be cut would be the water for irrigation to save the supply for household consumption. It is the national mandate," National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Ramon Alikpala said in an interview.

Alikpala said this would affect the farmers, who are presently in the planting stage. About 90 percent of the country's total palay output is produced during the fourth quarter to the first two months of the following year.

"The absence of rainfall did not increase the water of the Angat Dam, which is the main reservoir here in Luzon.

The lack of rainfall in the past two months has reduced the water level in the Angat Water Reservoir, the main water source for irrigation and for 10.8 million residents of Metro Manila and some parts of Bulacan and Pampanga.

The performance of the agriculture sector is closely being watched by the country's economists since it makes up about a fifth of the country's total economic output.

Palay production in the third quarter surged 20 percent to 2.43 million metric tons (MT) from last year's 2.02 million MT, boosting hopes that yields for 2003 will surpass last year's figures by at least 190,000 MT.

The Department of Agriculture is pinning its hopes on higher palay production in the second semester to achieve the full-year growth target for the agriculture sector.

DTI seeks agri department help in stabilizing prices

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is now reaching out to the Department of Agriculture to bridge the gap created by their differences on the issue of chicken importation.

Newly appointed Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima said the DTI would encourage more representation from the DA in the National Price Coordinating Council.

Purisima said the NPCC, which is headed by the DTI, should involve a more active participation from the agriculture department so that the two agencies could join hands in keeping prices of basic goods stable.

The DTI and the DA recently clashed on the issue of importing chicken in view of the expected supply shortage during the holiday season.

The DTI's proposal to import an additional one million chicken heads in December was opposed by the DA, which insisted that the additional supply committed by local growers would be enough to meet the increased demand during the holidays.

Purisima said the DTI and the DA should work on bringing back the prices of basic goods to pre-December levels.

"We will encourage more representation from the DA. We will meet more often until the price situation improves," he said in a press briefing on Friday.

Prices of chicken have gone up to as much as P130 per kilo since December, from an average of only P85, after local supply failed to meet the unexpected increase in demand in the last month of the year.

Local growers said that despite the 1.8 million to 2 million additional chicken heads they produced in December, the supply was still not enough to meet the unusually high demand.

The increases in the prices of chicken pulled up the prices of pork and beef.

Although the holidays are over, prices of chicken, beef, pork and other commodities remained in their December levels.

Purisima said the NPCC would continue its aggressive market monitoring operations and other programs that would help the government fulfill the goal of stabilizing prices within the month.

He said he was supporting the proposal for a change in the NPCC setup so that a DA representative would co-chair the body.

"I have no problem with that, but the proposal still has to undergo legislation by Congress. In the meantime that the law is not amended, we are encouraging more representation from the DA," he said.

Heavy . . .

From page B2

is going to stall our economy," he said.

Teves, a former lawmaker from Negros Occidental, said most of the money would be spent in April and May. "This is called buhos and will temporarily stimulate consumer spending in the national and local levels," he said.

Teves said the industry winners in the May 2004 elections include printing and publishing, telecommunications, garments, fast food, transportation, hotel and restaurants, advertising, broadcasting and print media.

He said, however, the elections would be a negative factor for the economy because foreign investment inflows would be adversely affected by it.

Other factors include the poor peace and order condition, persistent coup rumors, graft and corruption, and weak public sector governance.

Teves said the downtrend in investment in the second quarter this year might set the trend. Since April this year, the banking industry has been saddled with non-performing loans that amounted to P456 billion or 13 percent of total assets, he said.

Teves also predicted that national expenditures would slightly increase from P804 billion this year to P865 billion in 2004 due to pump-priming activities to spur countryside development and salary increases.

He also said the outstanding debt of the national government stood at P3.2 trillion as of September this year.

On the positive side, Teves said the inflation rate would remain tame and was projected at only 4 percent in 2004 compared to 3 percent this year.

Inflation factors include the weaker peso and higher electricity tariffs as well as expenditures from the May 2004 elections.

Teves also predicted the recovery of the merchandise exports in 2004 with a growth rate of 10 percent. The semiconductor industry will boom with a 20 percent growth in earnings with the continued recovery of the global electronics market.

Electronics would sustain the lead in Philippine exports with $8.7 billion as of the first half of 2003, Teves said, adding that this would increase by $100 billion by 2008.

He also said that remittances from overseas Filipino workers would increase by 11 percent or to $8 billion in 2003.

He said the sustained increase in OFW remittances is due to the continued hiring of higher-paid jobs like nurses, engineers, teachers, caregivers and entertainers.

He said the recovery of the global economy would enable more Filipinos to work abroad.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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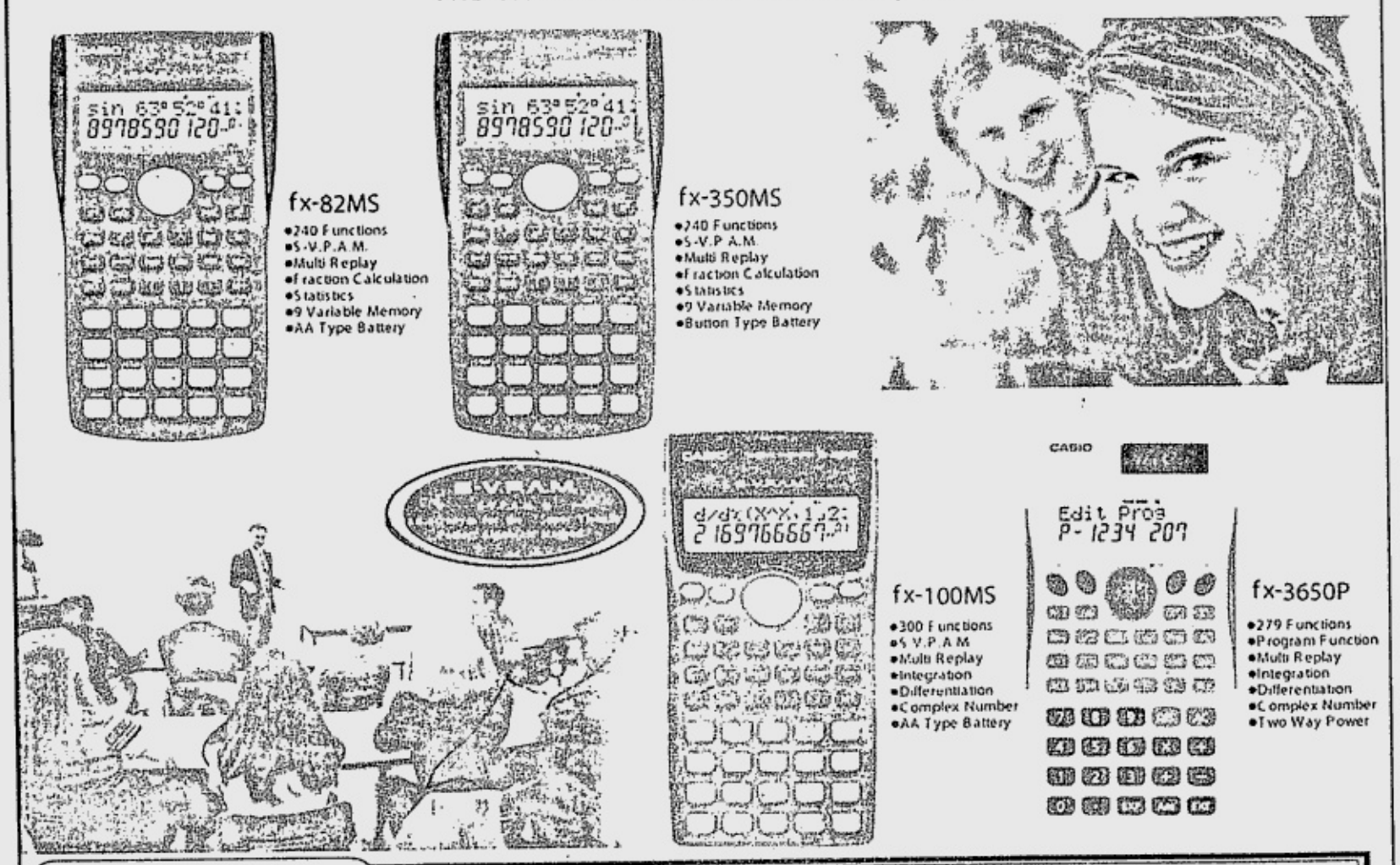

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Doubts emerge on US economy after jobs report

WASHINGTON—A surprisingly weak report on US job growth Friday roiled financial markets and sparked fresh doubts about the sustainability of the growth pace of the world's largest economy.

The Labor Department reported that the US economy generated just 1,000 jobs in December.

The report was a shock to economists, who projected average job growth of 148,000 in the month to signal an end to the so-called jobless recovery in the United States.

Additionally, Friday's report by the Labor Department showed job growth in the previous four months was revised lower by a total of 66,000.

Using a separate survey, the Labor Department said the unemployment rate dipped to 5.7 percent, a 14-month low, from 5.9 percent in November.

But analysts pointed out that decline resulted from more workers leaving the labor force.

"The unemployment rate dropped to 5.7 percent but only due to the fact that the labor force fell faster than unemployment did," said David Rosenberg, economist at Merrill Lynch.

Although the economy roared at an 8.2 percent pace in the third quarter, economists fear that sluggish job growth could dampen consumer sentiment and spending and eventually pull the pace of growth down.

"Fed officials must be quite nervous this morning, as the continuing lack of meaningful employment growth can represent a serious risk to the recovery's sustainability," added Anthony Karydakis at Bank One.

"The economy can keep going for a few quarters on tax cuts, productivity gains and tax refunds, but its momentum will be undercut unless hiring picks up significantly."

"To me, it's very disappointing. Business caution is still quite substantial, preventing them from hiring people," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at Wells Fargo Bank.

"The name of the game is productivity and to postpone hiring as long as they can. It's good that the jobless rate went down, but that is primarily because people looking for work dropped out (of the labor force).

"I would have to say this is still a jobless economic recovery. We have added a few jobs, but nothing we can get very excited about." But David Littmann, chief economist of Comerica Bank in Detroit, was unfazed by the report.

"Direction is more important than magnitude at this point," he said. "The leading indicators of employment growth are all in the positive column ... We're at a stage that is precisely where we were in 1994. The economics and financial markets are all suggesting in unison that there will be acceleration in job growth" later this year.

President George W. Bush said he was upbeat about US economic growth but that the anemic job creation figures from December showed more needed to be done.

"I'm really optimistic about the future of our nation's economy. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger," Bush said in remarks to a business group.

But Democratic presidential frontrunner Howard Dean said the report highlighted the failure of the Bush policies. *AFP*

Fed seen tied to steady rates

NEW YORK—Investors on Friday pushed back their expectations for the first increase in official US interest rates after a shockingly weak payrolls report clouded recent optimism on economic recovery.

With the labor market yet to show solid recovery, that postponed the day when investors think the Federal Reserve will start lifting the federal funds rate from its 45-year low of one percent.

The US central bank last raised rates in May 2000, to 6.5 percent. Thirteen cuts later, it hit the current low of one percent.

Fed funds futures, which bet on the path of monetary policy, slashed the chances of a rate hike at the Fed's June meeting to less than 50 percent from more than 80 percent before the payrolls report came out.

The futures market is now betting on the first rate rise in September.

"When coupled with upcoming inflation data that is likely to drop further, this must have the Fed somewhat worried," said HSBC Securities chief US economist Ian Morris.

Yet the top bond dealers on Wall Street were more reluctant to shift their calls for Fed tightening, according to a Reuters survey of the primary dealers who trade directly with the Fed.

Six of the 20 dealers surveyed still expect the Fed to start raising rates by the end of June, down from seven dealers in a previous survey. The majority—14 of 20—expect the Fed to hold steady through the second half of this year or even into 2005.

Even though the economy surged at an 8 percent annualized pace in the third quarter of last year and around 4 percent in the fourth quarter, companies have met increased demand without hiring many new workers.

That raises concerns about how long consumers will remain in a positive frame of mind if the unemployment rate remains at historically high levels close to 6 percent.

Policymakers have little ammunition left to stoke growth, after three rounds of tax cuts and aggressive easings by the Fed that slashed the Fed funds rate to a lowly 1.0 percent.

"Tax cuts and productivity gains can give you very respectable GDP (gross domestic product) growth for a few quarters, but ultimately the forward momentum of the economy will be determined by the pace of job creation. And the lack of any job creation to speak of can very well undercut the sustainability of the recovery," said Banc One Capital Markets senior economist Anthony Karydakis. *Reuters*

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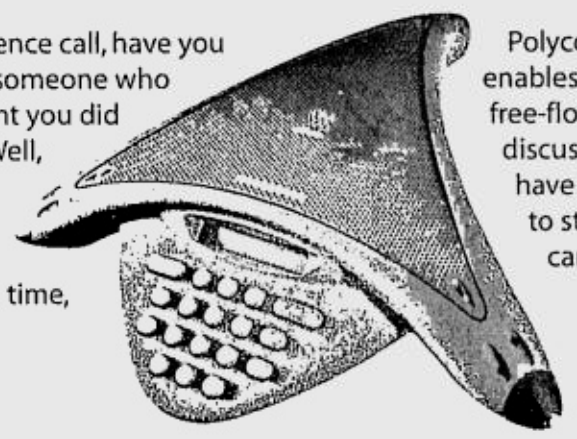

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ITALIAN police leave the Bank of America offices in downtown Milan Friday. Tax police investigating fraud at Parmalat searched an office of the bank and a former executive's home. REUTERS

Parmalat probe spreads

MILAN—Italian police searched an office of Bank of America and the home of a former bank executive on Friday as authorities extended their investigation of insolvent food group Parmalat's business partners.

A Reuters correspondent saw tax police enter a Bank of America office in Milan, the latest in a series of searches of Parmalat, its auditors and banks since one of the world's biggest corporate scandals erupted last month.

Another major bank, Deutsche, was questioned by Italian prosecutors earlier this week, about its role in underwriting a Parmalat bond sale last September, and sources in Germany familiar with the situation said another meeting might be called for "clarification of some points."

Nine people including Parmalat founder Calisto Tanzi and two outside auditors have now been arrested in the fraud case that has thrown a spotlight on the multinational's dealings with auditors and banks that lent it money and underwrote bonds.

The former head of Parmalat's operations in Venezuela and a Cayman Islands unit at the heart of the scandal on Friday turned himself in to justice authorities in the northern city of Parma.

Magistrates are investigating suspected fraud, market rigging and false accounting and say the hole in Parmalat's accounts could surpass 10 billion euros ($12.83 billion). No charges have been filed.

Authorities in Italy, the United States and Luxembourg have launched investigations into suspected crimes that Italian prosecutors say stretched back more than a decade.

And with Tanzi in jail and his business empire in ruins, Parma's soccer club said on Friday its board—including Tanzi's son Stefano, a daughter and third family member—was resigning. *Reuters*

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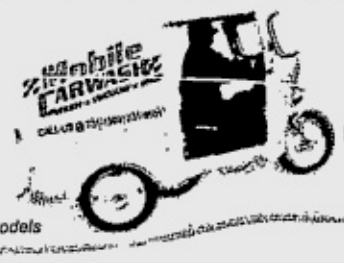

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IMF completes review of Argentina deal

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—The International Monetary Fund completed the delayed first review of Argentina's $12.55 billion loan accord, the Argentine government said on Friday, in a boost for a nation trying to regain investor confidence after an economic crash.

IMF chief Horst Koehler called Argentine President Nestor Kirchner with the news, the government said, seemingly putting an end to recent tension over whether slow progress in Argentina's debt restructuring might endanger the deal.

"Koehler called President Kirchner and said he was certain that the Fund was satisfied with Argentina's compliance with the agreed objectives," Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez said.

In Washington, Koehler said he would shortly recommend to the IMF's executive board the completion of the review at a meeting later this month.

The review came despite investor worries that the deal was deadlocked, after the IMF reportedly asked the government to hand over more money to private creditors holding $88 billion in defaulted government debt.

Argentina has offered to pay 25 cents per dollar of the defaulted debt, enraging thousands of largely foreign creditors who have not been paid anything since the economy collapsed in January 2002.

Lavagna said the US government had played a key role in pushing through the review with the IMF, singling out US Treasury Secretary John Snow for his help.

The IMF's Koehler said Argentina's letter of intent outlines the government's strategy for strengthening the banking system and completing the debt restructuring talks with private creditors. He did not elaborate.

The first review concerns about $330 million of the $12.55 billion loan program forged as a financial lifeline for Argentina last year.

The loan is crucial for helping Argentina in its slow recovery from an economic collapse comparable to the US Great Depression. The IMF is one of Argentina's few sources of funds after its record sovereign debt default. *Reuters*

US stocks on hold until major profit reports come marching in

NEW YORK—The confidence that has been so contagious among investors just hasn't caught on with employers.

Less than a week old, the bull market of 2004 succumbed to the uncertainty in a hurry. The Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 130 points Friday, wiping out most of early January's gains.

Whether that slide proves short-lived will depend largely on whether companies fulfill the market's optimistic profit forecasts for the fourth quarter.

"We'll certainly get some good news there," said Chuck Hill, director of research at Thomson First Call, which tracks Wall Street profit forecasts. Based on the latest projections and some early results, the companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index are expected to show 22 percent growth in profits compared with the final quarter of 2002."

"We're going to have the best earnings growth in 10 years," said Hill. But, he cautioned, "it's not sustainable."

And while some marquee names such as Intel Corp. and General Electric Co. are slated to report their fourth-quarter results in the coming week, the reporting season won't kick into high gear until the following week.

In the meantime, investors will be left to ponder the ramifications of the employment report, which actually may say a lot more about how strong corporate earnings will be this year than in the final months of 2003.

On its surface, the report appeared encouraging, showing that unemployment dropped to a 14-month low of 5.7 percent in December.

However, the national roll call of workers showed a paltry net gain of just 1,000 jobs.

So rather than an upswing in hiring, the drop in unemployment actually signaled a collective burst of frustration: More than 300,000 people gave up their search for jobs, and therefore were no longer counted as unemployed under the government's method of calculation.

Economists worry that such pessimism will translate into tighter consumer purse strings. Those not working stop spending from savings to maintain the same lifestyle, and their family members turn more cautious with their wages.

"Neither business nor potential employees have confidence in the economy," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist for Wells Fargo & Co.

"When businesses need help, they tend to rely on temporary help." As such, "People in the labor market don't seem to have a lot of confidence in the economy and the job market," he said.

The corporate frugality behind all this, driven by fierce competitive pressures at home and abroad, helped fuel the rebound in company profits and the stock market in 2003, forcing businesses to boost productivity.

But cost-cutting can only go so far, and with waning optimism in the labor market, the recovery could be undermined by weakening consumer confidence.

"Hopefully, employment gains will be much healthier during the second half of the year. By then this recovery will be three years old, persuading businesses to start hiring more people," said Sohn.

Despite Friday's decline, all the major indexes were up for the week. The Dow, which had its seventh straight weekly advance, rose 49.04, or 0.5 percent, closing at 10,458.89.

The Nasdaq composite index was up 80.24, or 4 percent, at 2,086.92, its third straight up week.

On Thursday, the Nasdaq also had its first close above 2,100 in 2 1/2 years.

The Standard & Poor's 500 was up for the seventh straight week, rising 13.38, or 1.2 percent, to 1,121.86.

The Russell 2000 index, which tracks smaller company stocks, ended the week up 14.35, or 2.6 percent, closing at 575.20.

The Wilshire 5000 Total Market Index—a capitalization-weighted index that measures more than 5,200 US based companies—ended the week at 10,929.00 up 151.42 from the previous week. A year ago the index was 8,758.43. *AP*

LG Card Co. resumes cash services

SEOUL—South Korea's troubled LG Card Co. said on Saturday it had resumed cash advance services after a two-day halt, after creditors provided emergency loans in the wake of a $4.5 billion bail-out agreed late on Friday.

The debt-laden card unit received 800 billion won ($677 million) in short-term loans from four banks after Korea Development Bank and other lenders wrapped up weeks of negotiations and agreed to swap debt for a majority stake in the company and inject 1.65 trillion won in fresh loans, said an LG Card spokesperson, Kim Byung-chul.

"Four banks provided 800 billion won in call loans overnight to help us resume weekend services," said Kim, adding the call loans were not part of the 1.65 trillion won fresh loans promised.

The late-night breakthrough saved the country's biggest credit card issuer from bankruptcy and averted a wider financial crisis.

The deal was struck after the LG Group agreed to cover 375 billion won of future losses at LG Card, while state-owned Korea Development Bank would cover a further 125 billion won.

The government has been trying to keep LG Card's problems from escalating and destabilizing the financial system.

A third of South Koreans are customers of LG Card, the biggest casualty of a credit boom that has left one in 10 South Koreans above the age of 15 with an overdue card debt. *Reuters*

Fastow trial moves ahead

HOUSTON—A judge moved ahead with trial plans for the wife of former Enron finance chief Andrew Fastow after a deadline for her to accept his conditions on a plea deal passed. Without a deal for Lea Fastow, a separate plea agreement for Andrew Fastow seemed unlikely, which could hinder the government's investigation of other executives from the failed energy giant, most notably former top executives Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling.

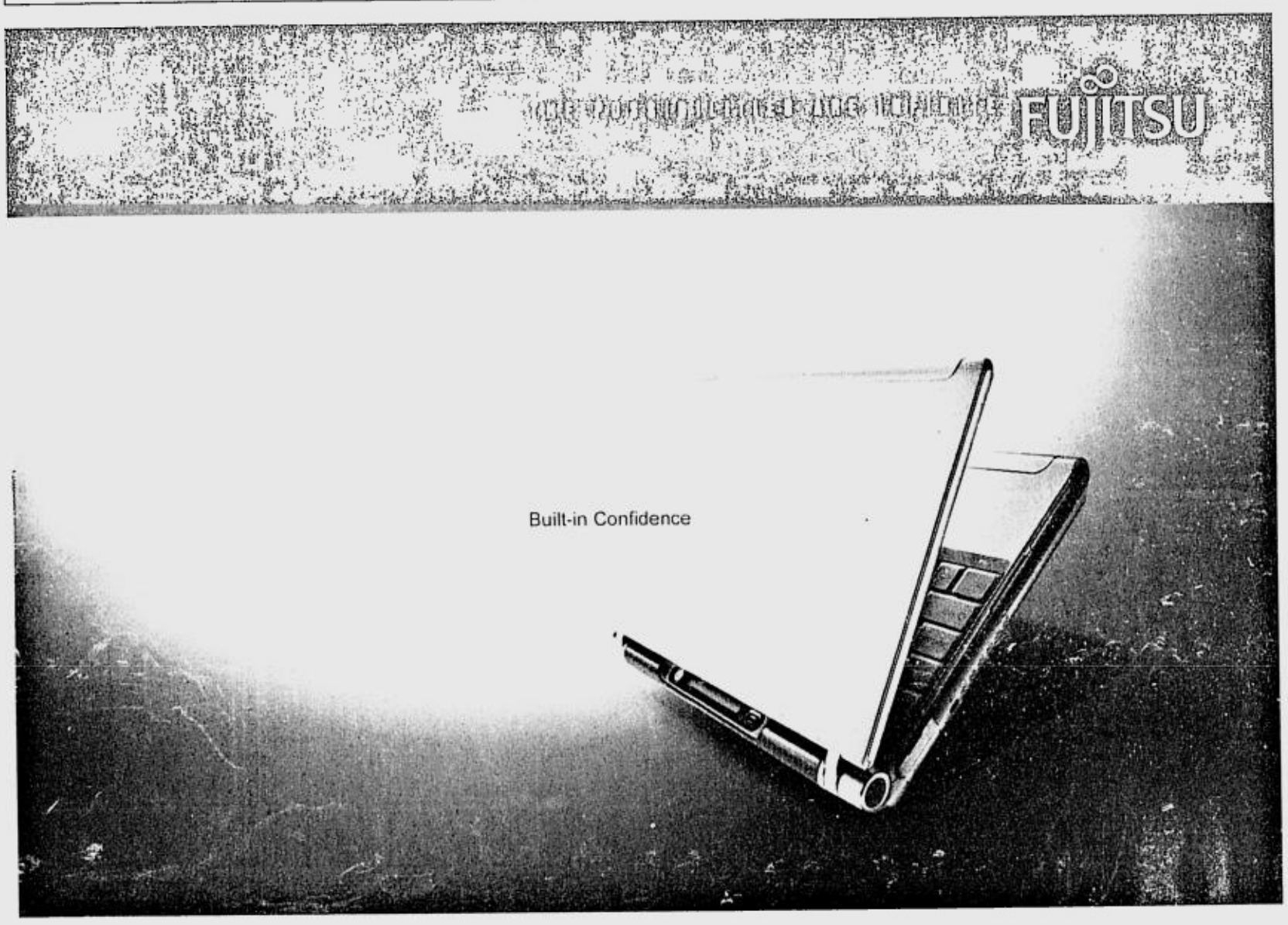
US District Judge David Hittner said Thursday he would accept a plea of guilty to a single tax violation from Lea Fastow, a former assistant treasurer at Enron, but balked at being bound to a five-month prison sentence.

He reserved the right to determine a sentence he deemed appropriate after federal probation authorities conducted a pre-sentencing investigation.

DeGeurin has said the five-month sentence for Lea Fastow was key to both plea negotiations because the Fastows have two young sons, ages 4 and 8, and want to ensure that at least one parent is at home for them.

Hittner gave Lea Fastow until noon Friday to decide whether to accept the plea agreement. After the deadline passed, the judge issued a statement saying Lea Fastow failed to advise the court of her "willingness to receive a plea of guilty" under his conditions, and her trial would go ahead as scheduled Feb. 10.

Andrew Fastow, who prosecutors allege arranged a web of schemes to enrich himself and others while inflating Enron's profits and hiding company debt, was negotiating a plea deal that could include 10 years in prison and a fine of at least $20 million, sources close to the case told The Associated Press. *AP*



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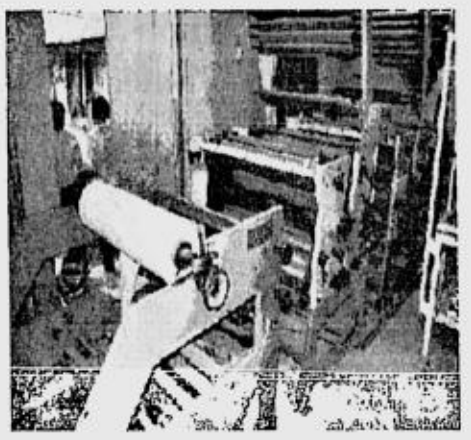

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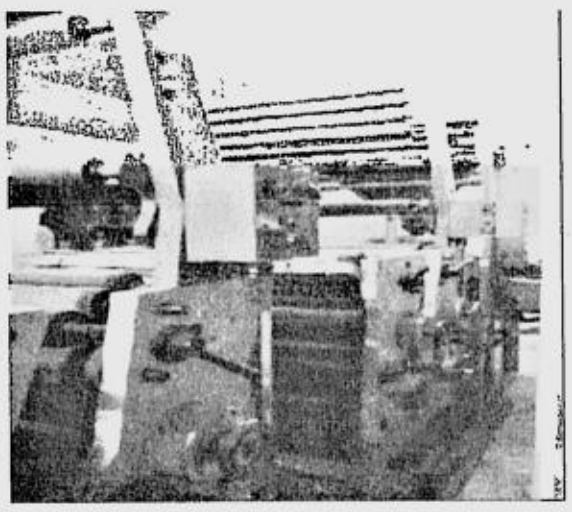

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
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The Cotabato City Water District invites interested parties to submit sealed bids for the public bidding of supply, delivery and installation of one (1) Unit - FLOAT CONTROL VALVE 20" (500mm) diameter, Flanged Type, Y-pattern with Double Chambered Diaphragm Actuated Hydraulically Operated, with approved budget of Php 1.5 Million per CCWD Board Resolution No. 008-03 dated March 25, 2003.

Interested parties may secure bid documents and the checklist of the qualification requirements from Cotabato City Water District.

The schedule of the bidding activities is as follows:

PARTICULAR	DATE/TIME
Issuance of Bid Documents	January 21 to 28, 2004
Opening/Submission of bids	January 30, 2004

Bidders shall submit two (2) sealed envelopes containing: a) TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS (e.g. qualification requirements indicated in the checklist, bid security as to form, amount and validity period, authority of signatory, after sales service/parts, catalogues/brochures/other literatures, etc.); and b) FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS at the Cotabato City Water District.

The CCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the CCWD. The CCWD likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) MANUEL D. MAGDAEL
Chairperson
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Jan 12 & 19, 2004)

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Yolanda Celina Buencamino Ramos

(April 3, 1953 - January 10, 2004)

"LANA", a true daughter of God, taught LOVE to all of us simply by living it in her 50 years of giving unselfishly.

From all of us she has left behind, her husband **Candido**; children **Dondi & Cecille, Abegale, Carla & George Abitria, Carlo**; grandchildren **Kelvin, Daniella & Josh**; parents **Amang & Paz Buencamino**; brothers **Mari** married to **Nellie, Victor** married to **Helen, Ogie** married to **Arline**, relatives and friends, we salute her for graduating life WITH HONORS!

Wake at: Holy Trinity Chapel, inside Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina. Cremation on: Wednesday, January 14, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. following the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

"Time is not measured by the years that you live. But by the deeds that you do and the joy that you give... So what does it matter how long we may live, if as long as we live, we unselfishly give."
(Helen Steiner Rice)

Please omit flowers.

Message of Thanks

We, the family and relatives of the late

P/Col. Andres D. Seva (Ret.)

who joined his Creator on December 28, 2003

sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flower, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and condoled with us in our moment of grief.

CLEOPATRA V. MADERAL

Died in the Grace of our Lord on the 7th day of January 2004 at the age of 56.

Her loving husband **Luisito**; parents **Feliciano** and **Cecilia Menor**; siblings **Linda, Bing, Bong, Bogie**; nephews and nieces, in-laws, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Villa Funeral Homes in the church of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. There will be a Mass on the 12th day of January 2004 at 1:00 p.m. Interment will follow at the San Carlos Memorial Park, General Santos City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item/Designation	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2003-270(2)	1 lot supply, delivery & installation of ATM signages for NCRBG, NCLBG, SLBG, MBG & VBG	P 9,180,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-325	150 units Automated Tellering Machines (ATMs) plus 4-year maintenance package	P122,100,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-326	Various printed forms	P 2,158,750.00	LBP Funds

Eligible to participate in the bidding are:
(1) Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships;
(2) 60% Filipino owned Partnerships/Corporations;
(3) Two (2) or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable;
(4) Cooperatives duly registered with the CDA;
(5) Suppliers with the largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget, and
(6) Suppliers with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget.

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on February 4, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Dvision of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

Interested applicants are requested to attend the pre-Bid Conference scheduled on January 20, 2004 at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO T. HERNANDEZ**
SVP, Corporate Services & Subsidiaries Sector
Chairman, Committee on Bids and Awards

(PDI - Jan. 5 & 12, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **February 18, 2004** at **10:00 a.m.** at the **National Food Authority Boardroom, 10th Floor, 101 Matimyas Building, E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City**, among all interested NFA accredited rice suppliers for the **supply of maximum 500,000 MT, 10% MOLSO 5%, 15% and 25% brokens of Thailand, Vietnam, and/or China origin in 50 kilograms net capacity polypropylene bags** with an appropriated budget of Php 6.6B from corporate resources.

All interested suppliers are required to submit price offers in US$/MT, CFR, FO, one safe port, one/two safe berth/s, for all specifications and all modes of payment under the following payment terms and arrival periods:

a. Documents Against Payment (D/P)
b. Documents against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of one hundred eighty (180) days from B/L date

Volume to be Offered (MT)	Percentage of max. vol. to be awarded
March, 2004	at least 25%
April, 2004	at least 25% / balance
May, 2004	at least 25% / balance
June, 2004	balance

Government suppliers who have delivered to the NFA **within the last two (2) years (2002-2003) and who do not have a bad track record may be awarded a maximum of 300,000 MT, 10% MOLSO. Other government suppliers and private suppliers without bad track record may be awarded a maximum of 25,000 MT, 10% MOLSO. Suppliers and/or source companies with pending import related accounts/ liability except despatch/demurrage are considered to have bad track record.** Vessels to be utilized should have a maximum load capacity of 15,000 MT.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

Certificate of Registration issued by the Bid and Awards Committee (BAC) is required from all prospective bidders. List of Registration and Eligibility Requirements maybe secured with the BAC Secretariat, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City starting **January 13, 2004.**

The **pre-bidding conference** will be held on **February 03, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.** at the **NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, 101 Matimyas Building, E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City.**

Submission of the bid together with the bid bond will be between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. on the tender date. Opening of bids will start exactly at **10:00 a.m.**

Suppliers who have been issued a Certificate of Registration (COR) for year 2004 by the NFA-BAC shall be eligible to join the bidding.

The terms of reference and bid documents will be available starting **January 13 up to January 27, 2004** (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.**
Chairman, BAC and Deputy Administrator

(PDI - Jan 12 & 19 2004)

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Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
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CORPORATE OFFICE

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING OF MWSS

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is planning to enhance its financial management system and upgrade capabilities of its in-house financial staff, which aims to increase productivity and strengthen governance.

In particular, the Project, through the use of modern information technology is intended to (i) improve management and financial accounting, corporate planning, budgeting & budgetary control, internal control & audit systems, and data processing; (ii) improve skills on strategic corporate planning; and (iii) provide technical mechanisms and training to boost staff productivity.

The consultancy services needed shall cover, but not limited to, the following:

1) Study, Enhancement/Updating and/or Modifications of the Existing Financial Management System and Internal Control Mechanism;
2) Design Corporate Planning;
3) Develop Manuals and Policy Guidelines;
4) Conduct training program on financial management after the completion of the study/review to ensure incorporation of the results in the training content;
5) System Development/Upgrading through computerization and/or application of latest technologies; and
6) Develop a transition mechanism in case there is a need to implement a new system.

MWSS therefore is inviting Local consulting firms to submit their request for pre-qualification together with their company profile and organizational structure, which will provide information regarding their field of expertise and specialization, and the experiences of key personnel who will be assigned to undertake the required consultancy services. On the basis of the submissions, MWSS will shortlist the consultancy firms.

Interested parties may secure the pre-qualification statement/forms and submit the same in five (5) sets including 1-set original copy on or before 5:00 P.M. of January 30, 2004 to the Office address stated hereunder. Reference time will be the bundy clock located at the same office. Late submission will not be accepted.

Engineering and Project Management Department
Ground Floor, Engineering Building
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines
Telefax No. (632) 9222568

(Sgd.) **MACRA A. CRUZ**
Acting Administrator

(PDI – January 6, 12 & 16, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Quezon City

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The National Food Authority (NFA) is inviting all eligible palay Farmers' Organizations (FOs) to participate in the distribution of rice under the "FARMERS AS DISTRIBUTORS" (FAD) Program of the National Food Authority.

All interested parties are advised to accomplish a Letter of Intent (LOI), copies of which are available at the NFA Provincial Offices in their respective areas, to be submitted within ten (10) working days after the last day of publication. They should likewise meet the following qualifications:

- Must be operational and registered with any of the appropriate registering agencies as listed below
  - Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
  - Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
  - Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR)
  - Bureau of Rural Workers (BRW)
  - National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Must be a member of a local farmers' action council or the Philippine Farmers' Advisory Board (PFAB).
- Must be a holder of NFA license as retailer/wholesaler and other incidental lines of activities, i.e., warehousing and transporting, if any.
- Must be a holder of Certificate of Operations and Good Standing issued by the appropriate registering agency, to be submitted to the concerned NFA Provincial Office.

Specifically, the NFA has allocated a total volume of some 903,874 bags of rice for this Program, distributed among regions as follows:

Region	Allocation
NCR	4,248
Ilocos Region	84,241
Cagayan Valley	117,684
Central Luzon	126,452
Southern Tagalog	80,806
Bicol	61,554
Western Visayas	130,790
Central Visayas	19,524
Eastern Visayas	51,250
Western Mindanao	37,963
Northern Mindanao	42,844
Southern Mindanao	55,859
Central Mindanao	51,702
ARMM	38,957

For details, they may coordinate with the nearest NFA Office in their respective areas. For further inquiries, they may visit or contact NFA-DMO located at the 5th Flr., Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City with telephone nos. 712-1572, 712-1708 or 712-1564.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP**
Administrator, NFA

(PDI - Jan 10 11 & 12 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ISABELA
Ilagan

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

January 8, 2004

The Provincial Government of Isabela is inviting all interested suppliers to participate in the sealed public bidding for various hospital equipment for the Five District Hospitals in the Province of Isabela.

BIDDING ACTIVITIES

Submission of Pre-Qualification documents	January 12, 2004 to January 24, 2004 at the Provincial General Services Office, Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela
Pre-qualification Conference	January 28, 2004 at the Governor's Office mini-conference hall, Capitol, Ilagan, Isabela at 10:00 a.m.
Bidding	February 20, 2004 at the Governor's Office Mini-conference Hall, Capitol, Ilagan, Isabela at 10:00 a.m.

List of pre-qualification requirements can be secured at the BAC Secretariat Office or call Gina at Tel. No. (078) 624-0327.

Only pre-qualified bidders shall be allowed to withdraw/secure the Term of Reference/ Bid proposal upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) and a governors fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) at the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

All particulars relative to eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended, and other applicable rules and regulations.

The Provincial Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive minor defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **FAUSTINO S. DY, JR.**
Provincial Governor

(PDI - Jan 12 & 19 2004)

INFOTECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Leo Magno

RP software firm sues Microsoft for $1.4M

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A LOCAL systems integrator has filed an P80-million ($1.4-million) lawsuit against Microsoft Corp. including its Philippine officials and chief software architect Bill Gates, accusing the company of conspiring to bring down the Philippine firm.

Documents obtained by Infotech showed that Compulab Technology Corp. has filed an "amended complaint" asking a local court to stop the software company from implementing an earlier decision to terminate its contract with Microsoft Philippines.

Compulab managing director Orlando Morabe filed the amended complaint on Dec. 5, 2003. The first complaint was filed on Aug. 1, 2003. The civil case filed at Branch 139 of the Regional Trial Court in Makati City.

The complaint was filed after Microsoft Philippines decided to "terminate" the large account reseller status of Compulab two years ago following the alleged failure of the systems integrator to meet the sales quotas given by the software company.

In his complaint, Morabe said that Microsoft Philippines and its officials have allegedly conspired to gradually kick out the systems integrator from its roster of large account resellers in the Philippines. Morabe also accused Microsoft of favoring other Philippine dealers over Compulab.

Microsoft Philippines denied Compulab's allegations, and pointed out that the agreement was not "terminated"—as stated in Morabe's complaint—but instead "expired and was not renewed." This effectively ended the agreement between the two companies.

In an interview, Morabe maintained that the contract between Microsoft and Compulab was indeed terminated. He even pointed out that the document showing that the contract was terminated was allegedly forged, prompting the software reseller to sue.

"That termination document was stolen from us because we found out that it was forged by Microsoft Philippines," he added.

Compulab is now asking the local courts to implement a temporary restraining order, asking Microsoft Philippines to reconsider its contract until the courts are able to resolve the legality and validity of the "termination" of the contract.

Apart from asking the courts that Microsoft pay them P80 million in total damages, Compulab is asking for another P1.5 million for punitive damages.

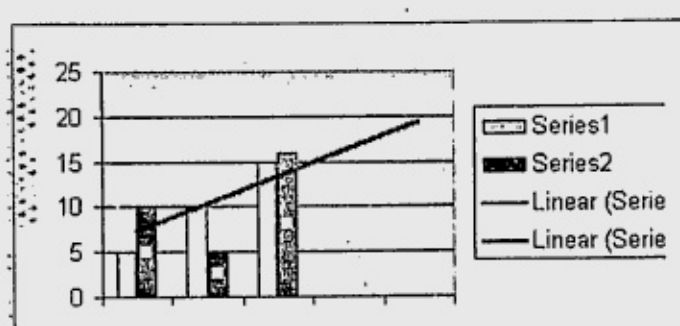
Respondents to the complaint include Microsoft founder Gates, and company officials Peter Hunt, Richard Francis, Kevin Hou, Edwin Boon, Kerwin Wong and Michele Kagahastian.

Francis and Hou are former country managers of Microsoft Philippines who are no longer part of the Philippine subsidiary.

Other respondents cited in the case were local systems integrator Nexus Technologies Inc., Juan Chua of Nexus, Larilyn Ramos and the City Prosecutor of Makati.

Microsoft Philippines spokesperson Mae Rivera and lawyers of the local software subsidiary declined to comment on the case.

However, Rivera said that there was no conspiracy behind the "termination" or "nonrenewal" of its contract with Compulab.



How to forecast using Microsoft Excel charts

By Jerry Liao

POWERTIPS

TO FORECAST a range of numbers over a period of time with the help of Microsoft Excel's spreadsheet, try performing the following steps:

1) Select the various cells on which you want to base your forecast.

2) After making your selection, click on the "Chart Wizard" button

3) After selecting the "Chart Wizard" button, click on the "Finish" button to create a default column chart

4) Right-click on any column in the chart

5) Select "Add Trendline," then select the "Linear" option on the tab which indicates "Tab"

6) After making the selections, go to the "Option" tab

7) Under the "Forecast" area, enter the number of periods for the forecast in the "Forward" field

8) Click on "OK"

For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. We would like to invite our readers to join The Powertips Group. Simply register online at www.brainshare.com.ph/register.htm and receive free tips via e-mail. For your comments, questions and suggestions, send your e-mail to infochat@mozcom.com.

Comelec has no contingency plan on poll automation

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE COMMISSION on Elections has no contingency plan if the Supreme Court issues a ruling declaring the contract between the poll body and the supplier of the counting machines "null and void."

"We asked the Philippine Computer Society (the body helping the Comelec implement the project to automate the counting and canvassing of votes) if they have a contingency plan once the SC decision comes out. They said the poll body has none," said Augusto Lagman, information technology professional and vocal critic of the current poll modernization projects. "The prospects of poll automation this year is getting scary because the Comelec is in denial. They don't know that they have a problem."

He urged the PCS to advise the Comelec to create a contingency plan immediately or resort to manual elections.

Earlier reports indicated that the Supreme Court would soon issue a decision on the P1.3-billion contract for the purchase of counting machines for the May 2004 elections.

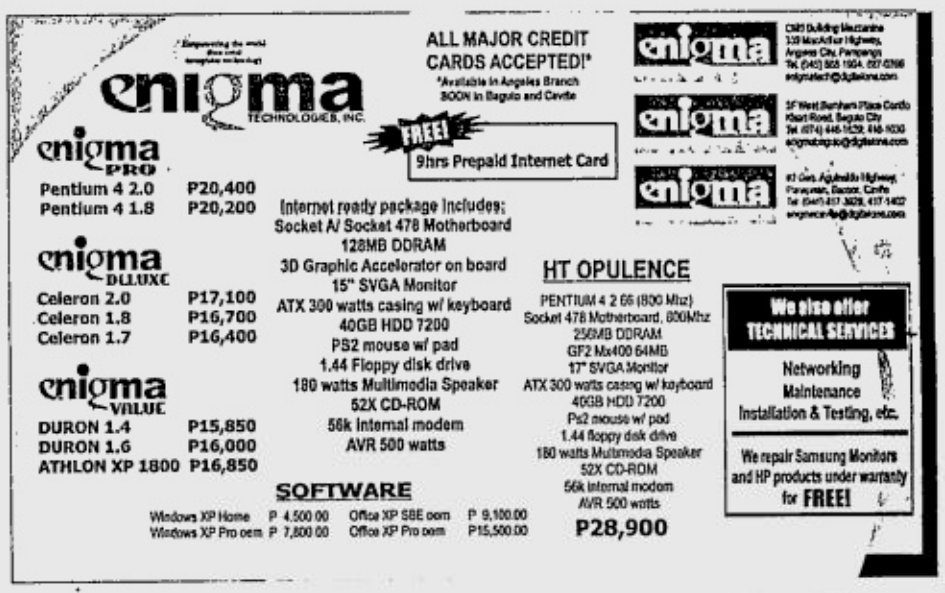
Lagman said that rumors spreading since last week points to a ruling favoring a petition declaring the bidding of the contract void. The executive was among those who filed a petition at the Supreme Court, along with the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines.

Based on earlier reports, a Comelec spokesperson, Ferdinand Rafanan, warned that the Supreme Court ruling might have an adverse impact on the poll automation, and might delay elections.

Meanwhile, a government official urged the Comelec to prepare for two possible scenarios: a manual or a partially automated elections.

"The worse scenario is the Comelec has to go manual," said Virgilio Peña, executive director of the Information Technology and E-commerce Council, the country's highest policy making body on ICT.

Simlarly, Lagman agreed that the Comelec should prepare for manual elections.



CHINA GROWTH SEEN

Report says DSL subscribers hit 55M worldwide; Asians lead

MORE people are now using broadband technology, particularly digital subscriber line (DSL), to access the Internet, several reports indicated.

Based on reports by United Kingdom-based group Point-Topic and the "DSL Forum," the number of DSL subscribers has reached 55 million during the third quarter of 2003, which represents an 18-percent increase compared to the second quarter of 2003, and an 80-percent increase compared with the same period in 2002.

The DSL adoption was highest in China, with about 2.2 million subscribers recorded as of the third quarter of 2003, figures from the DSL Forum showed.

China is set to overtake Japan as the country with the most DSL customers in 2004, the reports added.

The latest figures are surprising considering that South Korea—which is known as the most wired country to date—only added more than 200,000 subscribers during the said period.

After China, Japan follows with 971,400 subscribers added, then the United States (667,700), France (390,500), Germany (387,500), United Kingdom (343,200), South Korea (258,400), Italy (237,000), Taiwan (232,400) and Canada (159,700).

Still, Japan was the country with the highest total number of DSL subscribers at 9.2 million, with the US following at 8.2 million.

China is now in third place with 7.8 million lines, overtaking South Korea.

South Korea is currently the world's leading country in terms of broadband Internet penetration with more than 30 percent of the population subscribed to broadband DSL, according to the DSL Forum.

"In terms of absolute numbers of DSL lines, where Japan currently leads, I expect China to become the biggest during 2004. I think the US will also overtake Japan within two or three years. I do not expect any other country to equal these three except, eventually, India. There is little more growth to come in South Korea," said Tim Johnson, founder and publisher of Point Topic.

The report also indicated that the growth of DSL subscription was highest in Asia Pacific during the third quarter of 2003, which accounted for over 50 percent of total additional DSL lines.

Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

Fake AMD chips make their way to RP shops

FAKE or "remarked" microprocessors of AMD have found its way into the Philippine market, a recent report obtained by Infotech showed.

According to the AMD report, the remarked chips came with an attached warranty seal of at least two top computer resellers in the country.

The warranty seals were from Axis Global Technologies and PC Shack, as shown by pictures of the fake processors contained in the AMD report.

The AMD report showed that the chips that were inspected by chipmaker have AMD logos that were forged. The serial numbers on the chips were also invalid, and the font used for the copyright was not standard thus faked.

The chips were assembled in Malaysia, the report noted.

An industry source said that the remarked AMD chips are still being sold to unsuspecting consumers.

Asiantech is the exclusive distributor of AMD products in the Philippines.

In an interview, an official from Axis Global was surprised by the recent report since it has denied last year the selling of mislabeled AMD chips locally, saying that the situation was a "big misunderstanding."

The local distributor was accused as selling motherboards with AMD Duron chips mislabeled as an Athlon 1800 XP chips last year.

Axis Global is the exclusive Philippine distributor of Elitegroup Computer Systems motherboards.

Also last year, the Department of Trade and Industry has penalized two computer shops in Greenhills, San Juan for selling "mislabeled" computer AMD chip-based computers.

Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

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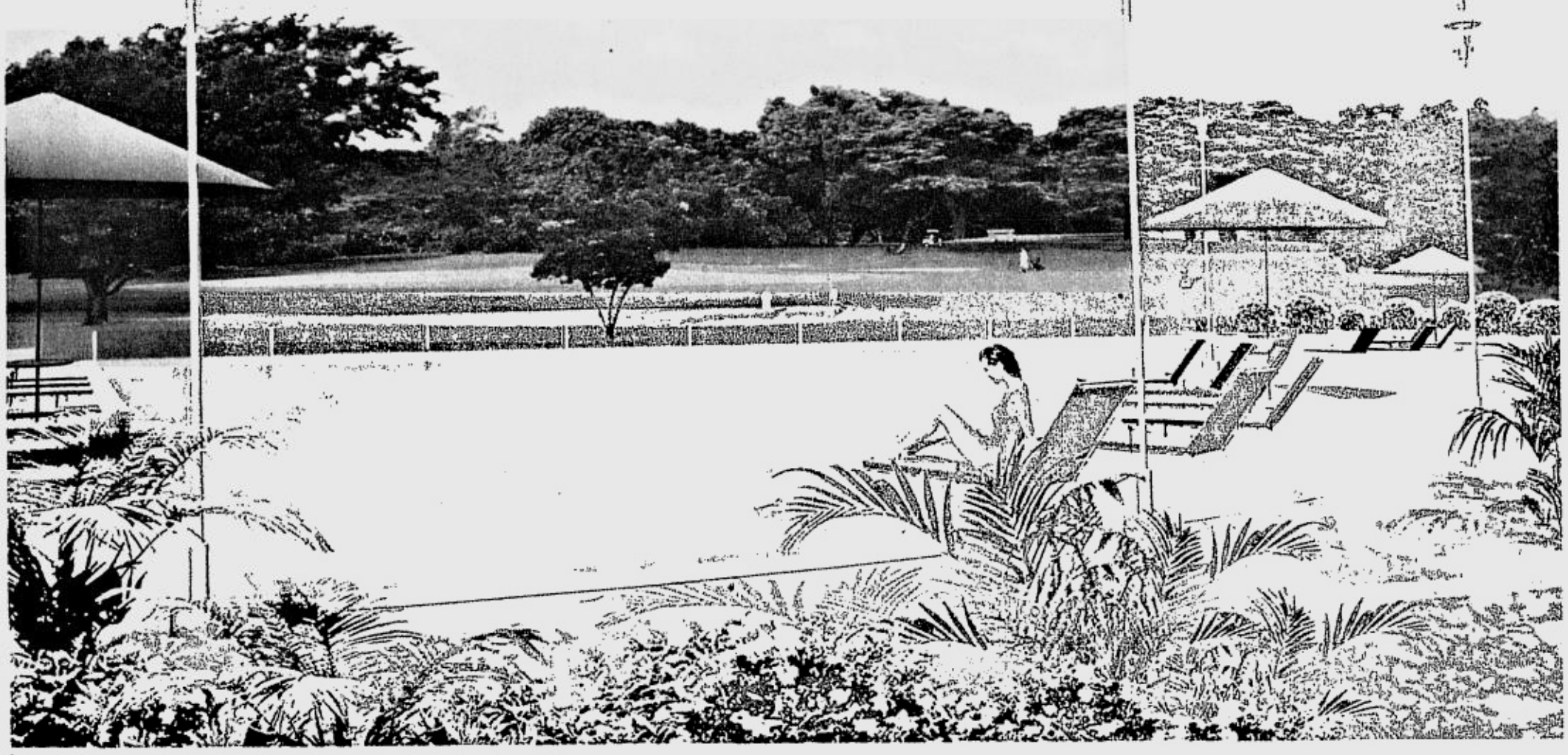

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MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Rice prices in RP are just plain crazy

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

IT'S not a problem for the rich, but it matters much for the poor. Briefly put, the price of rice here is way out of line. And planting rice keeps the Filipino farmer broke. Much of the data below come from the team of agricultural economist Dr. Bruce Tolentino, as well as from various clippings.

Paying double the price

Filipinos eat less rice compared to their Asian neighbors. According to the National Food Authority (NFA), each Filipino eats 103 kilos of rice per year. But another estimate comes from the international rice monitor, Riceweb.org. The following are kilos of annual rice consumption per person from select Asian nations:

Cambodia	169 kilos
Vietnam	165
Bangladesh	150
Indonesia	149
Thailand	109
Philippines	95

That amounts to around three cups of rice per day in the Philippines, or a cup per meal.

Filipinos buy less rice because it is costly—it is 2 to almost 3 times more expensive than that sold by Thailand or Vietnam. For example, well-milled rice here cost P16.53 per kilo in 2001. Compare that with the equivalent prices in Vietnam (P6.36) and Thailand (P7.54).

Rice here is so costly that the poor don't buy enough of the cheapest variety. The NFA deploys some rolling stores to urban poor communities and sells rice at P16 per kilo. And yet even in these areas, NFA stocks are not sold out. This implies that the poor find the rice to be costly.

The NFA has thus resorted to selling in half-kilo bags.

Lack of river networks

Why is Philippine rice expensive? Output here is limited because production is not efficient.

Nature poses a drawback, as rice is heavily dependent on water. That makes rice cultivation viable only during the wet season and in areas covered by irrigation.

The Philippines is not blessed with great river networks like those found in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia or Bangladesh.

The nation also plants less land to rice. Vietnam devotes 7.65 million hectares to rice, while Thailand uses up 10 million hectares. The Philippines plants just 4.03 million hectares.

Irrigation is lacking. Of the 3.3 million hectares of irrigable land, only 1.3 million hectares have been actually irrigated. Worse, of the latter number, only 800,000 hectares are fully irrigated, with the rest having to depend on rain.

Importing for 100 years

All told, natural and human factors conspire to make rice production here less efficient. The Philippines harvests around 13 million metric tons (MMT) of palay per year. That is far from

RICE/ B2-2

LOCSIN

CEO leads firm through team effort

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

COUNTRY manager Maurice Eugene D. Locsin walks around the office of computer systems developer Unisys Philippines to give a word of encouragement to his staff, check on the progress of key projects or participate in meetings to update the staff on where the company is headed.

MANAGEMENT STYLES

Locsin, however, is not one to breathe down the necks of his people to make sure that they do things right.

Instead, he prefers to give his people more than enough room to complete their objectives in the way that they see fit.

With the input from his superiors in the Unisys system, he sets the Philippine office's objectives at the start of the year.

These objectives and the performance against these objectives are reviewed in June and again at the end of the year.

He stresses that all employees, including himself, are measured against these objectives.

Locsin believes that managing by objective is more effective in achieving company objectives than keeping very close tabs on what his colleagues are doing.

"I believe in collaborative management, of working as a team. I encourage my people to decide for themselves how projects are to be done. My role is to provide them with the company objectives, then they ultimately decide how to get things done and take responsibility for their actions," Locsin says.

The BS Engineering graduate of De La Salle University is the first to admit that he is not good at following up on projects.

He believes that his 300 employees are responsible enough to finish their work at the prescribed time and in the prescribed manner.

"We offer different types of incentives to motivate the staff to meet their objectives. We also provide training to improve their capabilities. One thing clear is that the bar is always being raised," he says.

His staff can relate well with Locsin because he knows what the ordinary staff members feel having come up the ranks of the company to become partner and country manager.

Locsin graduated in 1980 and immediately worked for Burroughs Philippines, which would later become Unisys Philippines.

He started as a management trainee and eventually went into sales. It was a new field for him but he excelled at his work.

He sold both hardware and software and from there moved into systems integration projects in both the private sector and in government.

Locsin says the business sector has generally been quiet over the past two years but Unisys has been able to perform well because it was still able to get projects such as the NSO Civil Registry System, which is now on its 4th phase.

"We are active in two areas—government and banking, which has been our main market," he adds.

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In search of a virtuous, competent, just and healing president - II

MAPPING THE FUTURE

By Rex C. Drilon II

EVER since our first article on "In Search of a Virtuous... President" appeared in print in June 2003, the country has gone through many disturbing events, to wit:

1. Unsuccessful power grab at Oakwood;
2. Deterioration of the Senate into a circus with the Jose Pidal comedy;
3. Breakaway of two top national leaders from the ruling party, Lakas;
4. Presidential turnabout on a political decision not to run;
5. Disengagement of three political parties from the ruling People Power Coalition;
6. Now-apparent irregularities in the Comelec election computerization project that threaten the credibility of the counting and canvassing of votes in the May 2004 elections;
7. Possibility of a presidential candidate landing in jail for a crime committed in the past and the looming candidacy of still another presidential candidate of questionable eligibility and qualifications, and
8. Incredible railroading of an apparently unconstitutional impeachment rap against one of the country's most respected civil servants, led by a party (NPC) which is part of the coalition with the administration party.

Nation in crisis

In the last four months, the country has been reeling in a period of constant flux, going from one crisis to another, resulting in further erosion of confidence and growing hopelessness of a people nearing despair.

The recent launching of the MAP/PMAP/ISA-led Philippine Movement for Good Governance in Makati and Cebu, which were meant to start the process of lighting candles of hope from Aparri to Jolo, seems like a feeble effort against the rampaging forces of evil and destruction.

The ship of state is drifting and is headed for a giant whirlpool that can swallow this struggling republic. The ruling elite in government and business seem to have lost control of the rudders. No thanks to the raw, selfish and obsessive ambitions and the utter lack of sense of country of many in the ruling elite and the indifference of a passive and silent majority, the country and what is left of this democracy is now facing a crisis potentially more earthshaking than Edsa I or II.

Once again, what kind of leader is needed?

It is therefore time to revisit the question: What kind of leader do we need, in these troubled times, in this country? What kind of country CEO should we elect in May 2004 who can regain control of the ship, avoid the giant whirlpool of oblivion and steer us finally to our place in the sun?

In our first article, we focused on the qualities of this leader. In so many words, we wrote that the future CEO of this country must have character, must be competent and must have a sense of country. We had received positive reactions to the article, many agreed with us. But the picture is not complete.

It is important, yes, that we define the qualities and the attributes of a good president. But it is far more important, though, that we define the roles of a successful president and the behaviors corresponding to those roles. By adding this dimension, we focus on the job of the president and avoid the risk of being accused of being partisan and favoring or alluding to particular candidates.

PMAP initiative

Fortunately for this country, the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) has taken the lead to conduct a study on the success profile of a president, the results of which should greatly help the Filipino people in the selection process during our make-or-break elections in May 2004.

Hopefully, aspiring presidential candidates can find time to reflect on the results of this research and do a soul-searching assessment as to whether or not he or she can indeed meet the demands of the job of president in the various roles that he or she has to perform.

Led by Grace Abella-Zata, a group of HR professionals in PMAP started the research project earlier this year and earlier this month, they reported to the national convention of PMAP in Cebu City the results of their work-in-progress.

The team was trained in competency analysis methodology by SGV-Development Dimensions, Inc. who also shared their framework on leadership. The research included primary and secondary data sources and interviews with people who have or had ringside views of the presidency and those who continually study this institution. These included, among others, former presidents, the Senate President, the Chief Justice, the Comelec chairman, former Cabinet secretaries, a publisher, a university president, political analysts and observers, members of the Malacañang press and other dignitaries in Manila and Cebu.

The results went through a vetting process among selected PMAP members and representatives of professional associations which are members of the Philippine Movement for Good Governance led by the MAP numbering more than a hundred professional managers and businessmen and women.

The PMAP research team suggests that a successful CEO of this country has a minimum of five roles to perform: as navigator-strategist, as mobilizer, as servant leader, as captivator and as guardian of the national wealth and patrimony. Below are their definitions of these roles and the corresponding behaviors expected of a good president.

As navigator-strategist

The successful president steers the ship of state to arrive at the "destination" of a just and humane society. (The vision for the country is clearly articulated in the Constitution. The president is obligated and mandated to lead the country toward this vision.) The following behaviors are among those required by this role:

1. Properly addresses the root causes of poverty and other social problems;
2. Clearly works through the complexity of key national and global issues to identify opportunities and solve problems;
3. Discerns and prioritizes among conflicting interests, with the common good in mind;
4. Effectively addresses crisis situations to minimize disruptions.

As mobilizer

The successful president leads the executive department. He or she proactively builds alliances with concerned sectors to achieve complex objectives and builds consensus. The behaviors required are:

1. Attracts and empowers people with the right skills and motivations for government service;
2. Ensures that agencies under the executive department attain their objectives;
3. Anticipates and diffuses roadblocks to change initiatives;
4. Uses appropriate persuasion techniques to gain support from decision-makers.

As servant leader

The successful president serves the people with a genuinely caring heart and is a good example for all to follow. (We hazard to add: He or she believes in God and practices his or her faith.) The required behaviors are:

1. Sacrifices personal, family or other vested interests for the common good;
2. Displays humility and reaches out to all sectors;
3. Practices good work ethic;
4. Learns continuously.

As captivator

The successful president inspires unity, trust and optimism among the people and move them away from cynicism. Trust in the presidency and the government is built. The required behaviors include:

1. Understands the ideals and aspirations of the ordinary Filipino;
2. Conveys a simple but compelling picture of the country's vision and goals;
3. Effectively partners with media to inform and build support for programs and advocacies;
4. Shows consistency in speech and action.

As guardian

The successful president ensures that the national wealth and resources are used properly. Strong political will is demonstrated. He or she champions the fight against graft and corruption, ensures a level playing field and promotes competence and professionalism. (May I add: Committed to the democratic process.)

Required behaviors:

1. Understands the ideals and aspirations of the ordinary Filipino;
2. Advocates and practices meritocracy in government;
3. Champions reforms to stamp out graft and corruption in the bureaucracy;
4. Champions necessary political reforms;
5. Refuses to trade long-term benefits for short-term gain;
6. Displays courage in making unpopular but necessary decisions.

Conclusion

The latest burning issue of the impeachment of the Chief Justice will not be the last national crisis before the people face the task of electing the leaders in May 2004. Hopefully, the people and the country can survive all the other monkey wrenches that the evil forces will throw in their continuing efforts to consciously or unconsciously destabilize the nation and threaten our democratic way of life between now and the elections.

Just the same, perhaps, even at this time, while the PMAP study is still a "work-in-progress" and as new names are being added to the ring of the presidential derby, it might help to use the above criteria and roles as a basis for determining who among the declared and undeclared "presidentiables" thus far are the serious contenders and who are the pretenders.

The ugly word "winnability," which is an insult to the intelligence of the Filipino people, is definitely not a criterion. The suggested summarized scorecards (on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is excellent and 1 is Inept/Inadequate) to cover both the Roles and Attributes of a Good President appear below. A third chart to cover self-explanatory "other criteria" are included to capture the realities of voting in this country.

(The author is chief operating officer of Ortigas & Co. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Roles of the President	Cand. A	Cand. B	Cand. C	Cand. D	Cand. E	Cand. F
1. Navigator-Strategist						
2. Mobilizer						
3. Servant Leader						
4. Captivator						
5. Guardian of the National Wealth and Patrimony						
Sub-Total						
Qualities and Attributes of a Good President						
1. Character						
2. Competence						
3.Sense of Country						
Sub-Total						
Other Criteria						
1.Personal, family or business benefits received from the candidate						
2. Benefits received by my community from the candidate						
3.Recommendation of local political leaders/machinery						
4. Same town, province, region						
Sub-Total						
Grand Total						

'Bayanihan' in selling thrives

IAN Dela Cruz earns about P20,000 a month as an independent sales agent of BayanTel, selling telephone lines and digital subscriber lines (DSL) to small and medium businesses.

Not bad for a former caretaker in a piggery business who used to earn only P6,000 a month.

Ian is one of the successful partners of BayanTel under its KaBAYANihan in Business program, which aims to strengthen BayanTel's niche as a voice and data provider in the SME market by tapping entrepreneurs, business establishments and even school and civic organizations to become well-trained sales channels.

He was honored as one of BayanTel's top individual sales agent during the first ever KaBAYANihan in Business awards night recently held at the Virgin Café in Quezon City. For Ian, this is the first awarding ceremony he has ever attended, and as an awardee at that.

"It was an unbelievable feeling to be recognized by your peers," Ian shared in Tagalog.

Junie Pama,, BayanTel vice president for corporate and business markets explained that the KaBAYANihan in Business is a win-win business proposition that provides an opportunity for determined people like Ian to become outstanding achievers in their own right while helping BayanTel achieve its business goals.

"Guided by the Filipino spirit of *kabayanihan*, this program allows BayanTel to build partnerships with our clients and sales-inclined people like Ian. BayanTel then becomes more than a telco provider that supports their business operations but also a partner for their livelihood."

Pama shared that the KaBAYANihan in Business is patterned after network marketing by providing incentives to customers and partners who push BayanTel's products and services to their customers. "Network marketing works in the Philippine setting because of the high value we place on personal relationships.

"As we expand our network of sales agents, the people also develop stronger affinity for the BayanTel brand and enable them to be effective sales persons for the company."

Among the groups now part of the program are telco dealers, value-added service providers, professional organizations, special interest groups, civic associations, various college and university organizations, and other non-traditional channels previously untapped by the telco industry.

Franz Nadela, BayanTel head of marketing for corporate and business markets, said that since the program took off in middle of 2003, BayanTel's revenue from small and business markets has grown by 15 percent. The SME market is expected to contribute more than 50 percent of BayanTel's revenues from the business segment in 2004.

Rice prices in RP are plain crazy

From page B2-1

Vietnam's 23 MMT or Thailand's 32 MMT.

Because production lags, the nation has been importing rice, even as the government aims for self-sufficiency. With the exception of three years, the Philippines has been a net importer of rice for the past 135 years.

Buy high, sell low

Worse, planting rice keeps the Filipino farmer poor. According to the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, rice farmers earn an average of just P2,500 per hectare. Consider that it takes months to grow the crop, and that family farms are small. That results in meager incomes for three million rice farmers.

The farmers would be better off planting less rice, growing more vegetables and reserving some plots for cash crops.

But no, the farmers face a weird incentive system. A reasonable businessman would buy at low cost then sell at high prices to make a profit. But the National Food Authority has it the other way around: buy high then sell low, for an annual loss. The aim is to assure farmers a support price.

The NFA buys palay at prices above the prevailing market price, mills it into rice, and stores it for more than a semester. The NFA then sells the rice at below-market levels. This twist has led to huge subsidies for the NFA. For example, the national budget allotted around a billion pesos to the NFA in 2000.

A better alternative

The agency should focus rather on building up its buffer stock for emergencies. Import cheap rice and sell at a profit. The NFA would then stop bleeding precious funds from the national government. Better yet, support the current policy of allowing more farmers and traders to import rice.

Use the money saved to promote irrigation and to get rice farmers to diversify to vegetables and cash crops. Just import cheap rice to cover the shortfalls.

That way, the farmers will earn much more, consumers will buy half-priced rice, and everyone will get a richer diet of more rice and vegetables.

Comments to <darroyo@philonline.com>

(FROM left) Patrick O'Brien, UBS managing director; Antonio Go, EPCIB chair; Rafael Buenaventura, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) governor; Rene Buenaventura, EPCIB chief executive officer; and Lauro Baja III, chief representative of UBS Philippines

Toast to a $200-M bond issue

EQUITABLE PCI Bank (EPCIB) celebrated its successful $200-million lower tier 2 bond issue in a closing reception hosted by UBS AG, sole bookrunner of the deal. It was the largest subordinated debt offering in the Philippines and was conducted in two stages—$140 million original with a $70-million tap.

EPCIB faced several challenges including SARS, the Iraq war and a Philippine ratings downgrade, at the time of its issuance. The transaction, which was two-and-a-half times oversubscribed with large participation from key overseas institutional investors, has essentially recapitalized EPCIB for future growth.

Present during the cocktails held at the Tower Club of Philamlife Tower were key figures from EPCIB, UBS and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), together with several local banking industry personalities.

EPCIB'S Antonio Go (left); Rene Buenaventura and Rafael Buenaventura

EPCIB president and CEO Rene Buenaventura signs the tombstone while UBS' O'Brien and chief representative Lauro Baja III look on

(FROM left): EPCIB executives Ursula Alano, deputy treasurer and SVP; Robert Ry, SVP for retail banking groups; Nina Cabuyadao, first vice president; Annie Ngo, SVP; Noel Dizon, vice president; Shirley Ang, SVP and elite banking head; and Bunny Juat, treasury group head

Harbour Centre Port modernizes shipping in the Philippines

P5-billion investment to bring world-class shipping to the country

The most modern and most efficient port terminal in the Philippines is here. **Harbour Centre Port Terminal,** the only private commercial seaport in the port district of Manila, is now open to service the shipping needs of local exporters, importers and traders in the country.

Surrounded by circumferential roads 1 to 5 and adjacent to the south and north harbors, the new Harbour Centre port terminal boasts of long-awaited amenities unmatched by any other port facility in the country.

"For many years, we have seen tremendous growth, in terms of infrastructure and technology, in the major port terminals in Asia. Sadly, our country has lagged behind in this area. With the opening of Harbour Centre, we would like to bring a new era in shipping and put the Philippines at par with the best ports in the world," explains Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre.

Unloading a heavy- lift train for the Metrorail.

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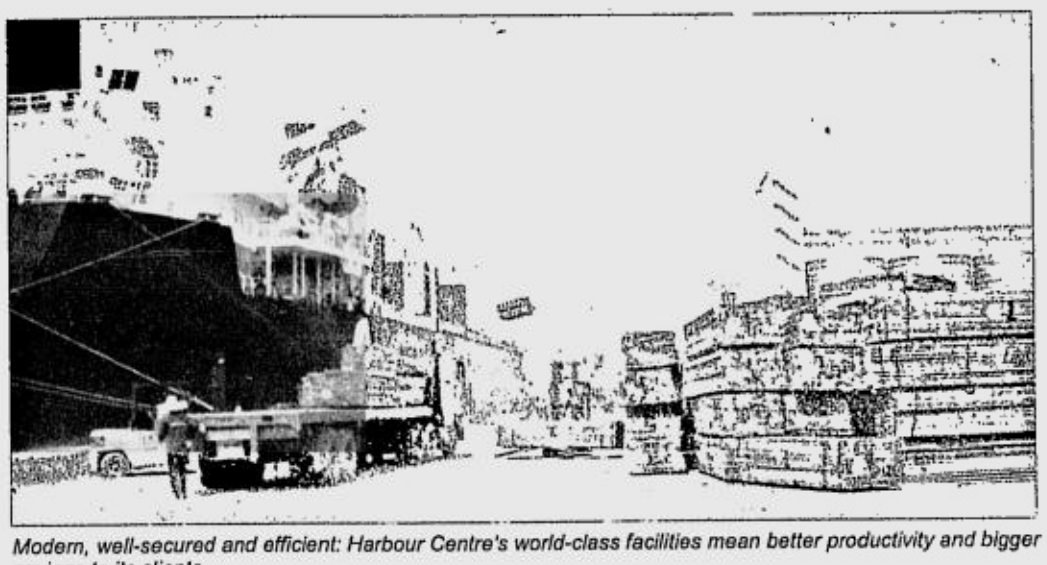
Harbour Centre is the only port terminal in the country that's at par with the world's best port terminals.

Designed to meet the requirements of international vessels, Harbour Centre boasts of two key port facilities. Its north and south ports can accommodate up to 12 vessels at any given time.

Developed using the most advanced technologies in reclamation and hdredging, Harbour Centre's berthing walls are supported by 27-meter steel sheet piles from Luxembourg, while reclamation work was done by Jan de Nul, a dredging and reclamation expert from Belgium.

The only seaport with three superhighway channels, Harbour Centre also boasts of a working apron measuring 30 meters wide by 865 lineal meters long (north port) and 20 meters by 250 lineal meters long (south port).

Complementing its superior facilities are ample port equipment, including an 80-ton heavy-lift capacity Gottwald Harbour Mobile Crane, as well as 15, 12, 10, 8, 5 and 3-ton forklifts, among other equipment.



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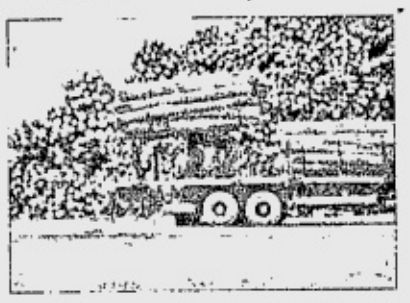


Ready for processing: Logs from Malaysia

Its well-secure yard terminal also guarantees against pilferage, a substantial source of losses for shippers.

And since it is privately managed, Harbour Centre offers straightforward rates, while eliminating undesirable red tape and corruption!

Customers also enjoy additional savings through a rebate program based on the frequency and volume of their shipment.

The Total Petroleum oil depot facility at Harbour Centre

"By cutting down on the movement of cargoes and virtually eliminating pilferage and bureaucratic procedures, we have effectively raised productivity and cost efficiency of our clients. This means huge savings of up to 50% in terms of both time and money!" adds Romero.

AN ECO-ZONE HUB

Harbour Centre is a PEZA-zoned estate. Thus, some of the biggest manufacturers and importers in the country have established their operation within the complex, not only to enjoy tax incentives but also to streamline their operations. Harbour Centre also leases and rents tracts of land suitable for non-containerized and containerized depots and warehousing.

Companies like San Miguel Corporation, Total, and Philippine Foremost Milling Corporation have established warehousing, distribution and logistics operations within the Manila Harbour Centre area. They receive, consign and house goods under one roof all on the same day!

STRONG PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS TEAM

Harbour Centre's modern facilities is complemented by a team of well-trained port personnel headed by its CEO, Michael Romero who is a candidate for Ph.D. in Business Administration.

"Aside from the fact that we have the facilities for international vessels, our port personnel are well-trained in accommodating ships from various parts of the world. We are experienced in handling vessels from Brazil, North America, Australia, Russia, Europe, Asia and from various countries worldwide," he adds.

The 80-ton heavy-lift capacity Gottwald Harbour Mobile Crane

AT PAR WITH WORLD-CLASS PORTS

Harbour Centre's expansive port terminal is capable of handling up to 3 million tons of breakbulk cargoes and up to 400,000 TEU's of domestic containers.

The port also boasts of breakthrough SILO facilities for cement and grains, allowing efficient unloading, storage and packaging of cement and grain products.

"A port terminal is a gateway to our country's trade and commerce," says Romero. "Aside from encouraging investors to bring in more business to the country, we would like to help boost economic growth by providing local industries with a world- class port terminal that offers higher efficiency at a lower cost."

HARBOUR CENTRE'S UNIQUE ADVANTAGES

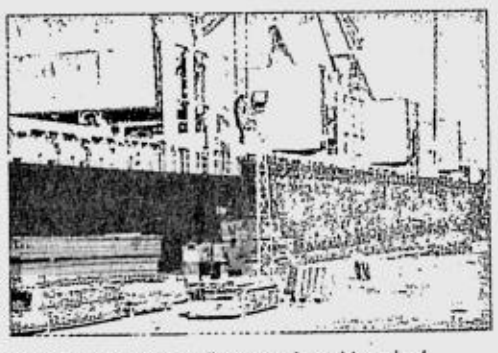
- Guaranteed faster and more efficient cargo discharging and handling services
- Guarantеed faster vessel/shippng turnaround
- Guaranteed no pilferage
- Guaranteed no hidden costs
- Guaranteed no red tape
- Guaranteed no corruption

SUPERIOR PORT FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

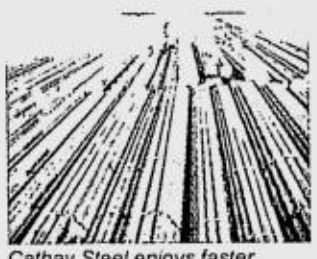
- Two (2) Key Port Facilities- Harbour Centre's North and South Port can hold up to 12 vessels at a time
- North Port: 865 lineal meters of berthing capacity which can hold up to 8 vessels at a time
- South Port: 250 lineal meters of berthing capacity which can hold up to 4 vessels at a time
- Berthing Walls are supported by 27 meter long steel sheet piles from Luxembourg, while reclamation works were done by Jan de Nul of Belgium using the most advanced technologies in reclamation and dredging.
- Berthing Drafts: from -10 m.l.l.w to -11.5 m.l.l.w
- Working Apron: 1) North Port 30 meters wide by 865 lineal meter-long and; b) South Port 20 meters wide by 250 lineal meters long
- Back-up Area: 15 hectares with a stacking capacity of up to 6 TEU's high and can withstand up to 9,000 PSI in strength
- The only seaport with 3 superhighway channels of -10 meters to -11.5 meters in depth and 7 to 14 kilometers in length.

Harbour Centre is good for business!

Many companies are now enjoying the benefits of working with Harbour Centre Port Terminal. By providing higher level of operational efficiency and eliminating red tape and corruption, more and more companies from various industries are turning to Harbour Centre as the port terminal of choice in Manila.



Harbour Centre's well-secured yard terminal eliminates losses from pilferage



Cathay Steel enjoys faster turnaround for its steel shipment

Cathay Steel, a client of Harbour Centre has improved its operations, cutting down turnaround time from 14 days to 2.5 days for its steel shipment. Asian Globe and DSL, which had to deal with pilferage on numerous occasions, enjoyed substantial savings on their logs and lumber shipment since their goods were securely handled by Harbour Centre.

Using Harbour Centre's port terminal also meant faster vessel turnaround and efficient operations on discharging and handling of frozen fishes and produce shipment for Reefer Inc, while bigger dollar savings on exports were enjoyed by exporters Nur Shipping and Ting Guan.

Meanwhile, beverage manufacturing giants San Miguel Corporation and Asia Brewery use Harbour Centre since the port's no-red-tape policy speeds up handling and distribution of their cargoes.

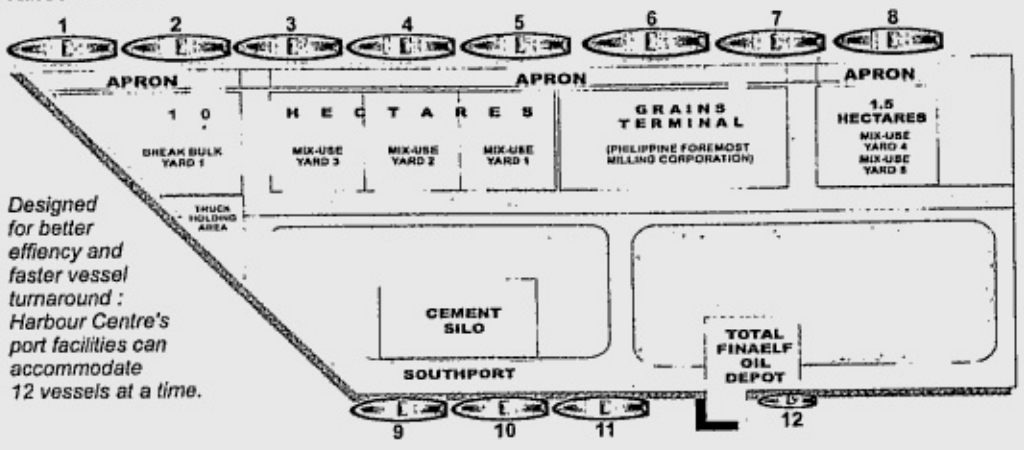
Domestic containers being dispatched at Harbour Centre.

Other companies whose locatorship at Harbour Centre presents substantial savings are Total Petroleum, Star Cement and La Pilipina Uy Gongco.

Aside from the above mentioned industries, Harbour Centre also caters to the needs of such industries as

San Miguel Corp.'s locatorship at Harbour Centre means cost-effective and more efficient operations

Breakbulk (steel, coils, scrap metals, logs, lumber, cement, bagged rice, corn, heavy equipment, bagged cement and cars/automobiles), **Bulk** (oil, petroleum, grains, wheat, flour, cement, silica, and gypsum), **Livestock** (cattle, pigs, horses and lamb) and **Containerized**. (domestic carriers) and **RORO** (roll-on, roll-off).



Designed for better effiency and faster vessel turnaround : Harbour Centre's port facilities can accommodate 12 vessels at a time.

World-class shipping is here

At the height of the galleon trade, the Philippines was the center of commerce: produce from different countries were shipped to Manila. From Manila, precious shipment, including herbs and spices were then ferried to Acapulco.

Over the years, however, Manila lost its appeal as Asia's trade and commerce hub. As neighboring countries modernized their ports using the most advanced technology and equipment, Manila's harbors remained virtually unchanged, notwithstanding the fact that cargo vessels have grown bigger and new technologies have become available.

The vision of putting Manila at par with the world's best port terminals is the idea behind the development of Harbour Centre Port Terminal. "With the opening of Harbour Centre, we hope to set the pace with a port terminal that's modern, expansive and designed for the needs of today's industries," says Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre.

Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre

Harbour Centre's world-class capabilities are reflected in its well-paved roads, wide terminal yard and spacious berthing spaces which provide a sharp contrast to local ports we are all too familiar with. Modern terminal equipment, including an 80-ton crane and forklifts, ensure fast and efficient movement of shipment from unloading to storage.

The development of this new port facility started as far back as 1998. Aside from offering unsurpassed access to other port facilities, Harbour Centre provides warehousing, distribution and logistics facilities to some of the biggest names in the local manufacturing and distribution companies.

Being privately owned, Harbour Centre is also able to provide lower service fees to companies using its facilities. By mid-2004, Romero says they are looking forward to the completion of the port facilities which will further expand the services they are currently offering to the clients.

"When ships from abroad come to the Philippines, the first thing they see is our port, and needless to say, they judge our efficiency based on what they see," explains Romero. "We hope to create a better impression when foreign cargo ships come to our country by giving them access to a well-equipped port terminal."

More importantly, Romero adds, Harbour Centre's modern facilities will help boost local economy, by improving the productivity of local industries as far as shipping, warehousing and distribution of their goods are concerned.

World-class port facilities. Lower cost. Faster turnaround. Higher productivity. With these advantages, Harbour Centre is making the future of shipping a reality for local industries today.

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email: iservillon@harbourcentre.com.ph/ www.harbourcentre.com.ph

BUSINESS Monday

Good grooming sells well amid tough times

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

WHEN times get tough, people usually cut back on dining out, traveling or shopping. But the business of learning how to wear clothes properly, how to hold a wine glass or how to speak in public, hardly ever feels a slump.

At least that's how it has been for John Robert Powers, a personality development center that has been in the country for 20 years.

International director Marivic Padilla-Catala says despite the turmoil that has besieged the Philippines over the past two decades, they did not run out of clients, whose aim is self-improvement.

Their bread and butter has not been the corporations, but the individual clients who are willing to pay the price and spend time in search of a better self.

These individuals include future leaders of the country. Catala admits that some presidentiables have already sought their help for the coming elections. She adds that although the politicians asked that the lessons be given in their homes, they declined and insisted that the lessons be held in their offices.

The school has even created an Image and Confidence Boost Workshop Empowerment Series for politicians.

The John Robert Powers courses also include vocal and mental exercises to relax and prepare the speaker for a presentation. They ask the "students" to do actual presentations to assess if they applied the techniques that were taught to them.

But while they are not lacking in individual clients, Catala says they are now pushing for corporate accounts.

"There is a need for companies to help develop the personalities and image of their employees," she says.

She admits that what they teach are basic things that people already know but do not usually apply.

Tet Castillo, curriculum director points out, for example, that women who work should wear make-up, especially those in the banking sector or those who deal directly with clients.

"It is in the first 11 seconds that a person makes an impact," she points out. "Power dressing simply means putting together everything well."

For example, she says, it is a no-no for men to wear rubber-soled shoes with their suits or Barong Tagalog.

"Rubber-soled shoes are for casual wear only. Suits and barong should always be worn with leather-soled shoes."

CATALA

CASTILLO

She hastily adds that executives must avoid Sylvester-and-Tweetie ties.

Castillo says that it is important for individuals to determine their body structures and identify clothes that will look good on them.

"There is so much resistance to putting on make-up because the notion is, no make-up is clean. But if you look at (singer) Mandy Moore, she appears not to have any make-up but she does. The goal is to look natural even with make-up," she says.

According to Castillo, it is part of men's good grooming to have a good hair cut and to avoid stubble or beard and moustache shadows.

Going through a John Robert Powers program is not cheap. It can cost P33,000 to over P300,000 depending on the length and depth.

Other than their personality and career development program, they have drawn up the Advanced Executive Program where image projection, power dressing, total beauty care and interpersonal and interactive elements are discussed. And of course, social etiquette is a must.

But Catala adds that their programs have a wide range. Every summer, what is popular is their program for kids (as young as five), where they are taught how to eat spaghetti properly or how to interact with old people. They also have one for teenagers to develop their self-esteem.

John Robert Powers was a real person. The John Robert Powers System was set up 80 years ago.

Differences among whisky, rum, gin, wine, brandy and champage

"I was so glad to read your article about the difference between cognac and brandy last month. Could you please give us the differences among whisky, rum, gin, red wine, white wine, brandy and champagne?"

A: Thank you for your email. Let's start off with whisky.

- Whiskey, with an "e" is how the generic word is spelled when unconnected to a brand name. Most Irish and American distillers also use this spelling. Scottish and Canadian products are however spelled without the "e" as in whisky.
- Whisky can only be called Scotch if it has been distilled and matured in Scotland
- There are two kinds of whisky: malt whisky, used essentially in the creation of blended whiskies, or bottled in small proportions as a single malt; and grain whisky, which is combined with malt whisky to create the famous blends.
- Malt whisky is made from malted barley only, while grain whisky is made from malted barley together with unmalted barley and other cereals.
- All the whisky produced in Scotland was of the malt variety

Gin

Gin is made by distilling fermented mixtures of grains and flavoring the resulting alcohol with juniper berries. The name is derived from the French word genievre (juniper).

Gin is believed to have been invented in Holland in 1650 by Dr. Franciscus de La Boie, also known as Dr. Sylvius of the University of Leyden. The doctor was trying to develop an inexpensive treatment for kidney disorders so he mixed two known diuretics: grain alcohol and juniper berries.

The drink became known as "jenever," which is Dutch for juniper. It became popular with British soldiers occupying Holland who called it "Dutch Courage" and brought it back to England, where it became a favorite of the poor.

Vodka

Vodka is a refined and filtered liquor distilled at 190 proof and bottled for sale at 80 to 110 proof. Originally made in Russia from potatoes. It is usually distilled from corn and wheat in the US.

The difference between various vodkas depends on the types of grains used and the distilling and filtering processes.

Vodka is colorless, tasteless and odorless. It is not aged.

Rum

Rum comes from sugarcane. It is the alcoholic distillate or a mixture of distillates from the fermented juice of sugarcane, sugarcane molasses, or other sugarcane by-products distilled at less than 190 proof

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Champagne

Champagne is choice white wine in which a special yeast is added and put through a second fermentation while already bottled. A sparkling wine can only be called champagne if it is made in the champagne region of France. Other sparkling wines, though made in the same method or Methòde Champagnoise are not classified as champagne because they are made outside the wine region.

How the bubbles arrived

- Of course, it was by accident. In the mid 1600's, Champagne reds, which were very clear and of a rosé composition, were shipped in casks (there were no bottles then) to the court of the young King Louis XIV in Paris (not yet in Versailles since the palace was under construction).
- Given the cold weather of the Reims region, the grapes harvested in mid-October (to achieve optimal maturity) were stored in vats in cellars where they started their fermentation. The cold weather of approaching winter stopped the fermentation and it is only in April or early May of the following year when the temperature rose again that the fermentation process started anew and suddenly turned the inside of the casks into a frothy wine for a few weeks until the fermentation would be terminated.
- Meanwhile, the wine had been sold and the casks were in the cellars of the consumers. Nobody could explain at the time why this frothiness appeared in the Spring but the Champagne wines became known for this particularity.
- Louis XIV became quite fond of this bubbly liquid and would drink it with glee in the Spring and also during the later months when the wine was still. Since the King liked it... everybody at court liked it... and it is only because one of his favorite courtiers got disgraced that this fad was exported.
- The Marquis de St. Evremond, having wrought the displeasure of the Sun King, was exiled to England. He brought with him a few casks of Champagne wine just at the time when the spring fermentation was taking place. The English courtiers of Charles II loved it and St. Evremond spent most of his time in exile trying to organize transport of Champagne casks from Reims to England, something that was not easy since there was very little inter-nations trade in the 17th century.
- Besides drinking it, the British contributed to the Champagne we know today. Unlike France at the time, England already manufactured bottles to transport Ale. Very quickly, some English merchants tried to conserve the bubbles of the spring fermentation by enclosing them in a bottle with a cork that was attached either by string or with thin wire. That way they could sell frothy Champagne all year round. Champagne as we know it was born.
- We have not mentioned Dom Perignon yet! Dom Perignon as the inventor of Champagne is a myth. Pierre Perignon, a Benedictine monk of the Abbey Hautvillers, appeared much later (1685) when bottle Champagne was already in existence. His biggest contribution was to blend the juices of different vineyards to make a more complex Champagne.
- The French and English Courts' passion for Champagne spread to other courts of Europe and the Champenois learned to bottle the product at the production site. Bottles were shipped in large wooden cases with lots of straw between each bottle. What the producers could not control, however, was the amount of sugar imprisoned in each bottle and continuing to ferment. In some bottles, the level of pressure of carbon dioxide (the gas that makes the bubbles) would raise to 3 or 4 atmospheres and frequently the hand blown bottles would explode. For most of the 18th century, Champagne remained a royal product because it cost so much due to the high rate of self destruction (frequently up to 80 percent). It is only in the early 19th century that a pharmacist called François invented a tool to accurately measure the amount of residual sugar inside each bottle, thus limiting the amount of pressure that would build. The rate of breakage plummeted and Champagne became a more democratic drink.

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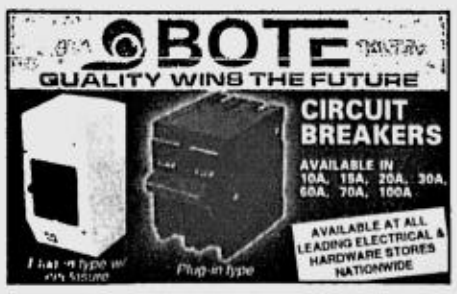

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'Kenkoy' lives

TONY VELASQUEZ photographed in 1990. After the untimely death of his partner Romualdo Ramos in 1932, he continued the comic strip and established it as popular culture.

Almost 75 years after the comic strip appeared, the character—and the language—it introduced are still with us

WITH hair thickly slicked back like Valentino's and wearing baggy trousers, Kenkoy was a clotheshorse.

By Yeyey Cruz
Contributor

ON JAN. 11, 1929, Francisco "Kenkoy" Harabas came to life on the pages of Liwayway Magazine. The four-frame comic strip "Mga Kabalbalan ni Kenkoy" was considered fresh, inspired and seminal.

Kenkoy appeared in the first frame borrowing a ukelele, then sauntered out. His hair, slicked back, was reminiscent of Valentino; his plaid baggy trousers the height of fashion. What happened next was hardly worth commenting on: Kenkoy walked down the street strumming his ukelele, was chased by a mad dog making him skiddaddle up a lamp post, disheveled.

This was not high adventure, it had no political wit, the character was not a mythical figure drawn from legend or fable. There was no super power to unleash. He wasn't even a talking rodent, dressed in short overalls and gloved hands. It was plain *kakenkoy-an*, with the mishaps of everyday living rendered with an economy of illustration.

In fact, it would not be until the Japanese occupation that events in Kenkoy's life would be worth commenting on. This was because the strip was chosen to be the purveyor of Japanese propaganda.

Until then, Kenkoy's life was uneventful. A flat tire, a street fight, a walk to the park, a visit to the store—the events were mundane, treated with a hefty dose of drollness that readers identified with and laughed at.

Kenkoy's ability to make light of unfortunate episodes and make the most out of every dire situation in the most *kenkoy*-like manner, endeared him to Liwayway readers.

Kenkoy struggled to make sense of himself in the big city and, on another level, of his life. Each strip—churned out first by the duo of Romualdo Ramos (who supplied the storyline) and Tony Velasquez (who did the drawings) and three years later, just by the latter after Ramos' death—was of someone whose life was shaped by day-to-day events.

While some comic strip "stars" like Nancy or Bumstead never aged, Kenkoy was more akin to Gasoline Alley where characters grew old, had babies, moved to other towns, matured.

Country bumpkin

A *probinsyano* sent to study in Manila by his cantankerous but loving parents, Kenkoy's comings—and goings—immediately gathered a host of characters that would shape his life and the comic strip: his parents, Mang Teroy and Aling Matsay, who visited him in the big city; best friend Binong, who was always there for Kenkoy; arch rival Tirso for the affections of the *dalagang Pilipina* Rosing, Kenkoy's future wife. There, too, was Rosing's mother, Aling Hule, who watched over her daughter's suitors' antics and put them to the test.

Outside the comic strip, Kenkoy's life would have been so ordinary as to be boring. But Velasquez, a keen observer of life, managed to create interest in events that people did everyday—Kenkoy's encounter with a rabid dog, dealing with Rosing's ornery mother while trying to outwit his rival.

By injecting humor and happenstance, Velasquez made Kenkoy's "ordinariness" something his growing readership could relate to and eventually, love. Kenkoy also had to talk the talk, as much as he walked the walk, trying to speak English and even Spanish.

Thus, carabao English would enter the lingua franca via the humblest of publications. The grammatically incorrect constructions were embraced by the amused public in far-flung areas where Liwayway, Bisaya, Hiligaynon, etc. were sold and read. And when these readers came to the big city, they tended to copy Kenkoy's English construction—a tendency that remains to this day, as well as the admixture of English and Tagalog to create Taglish.

Bay-gali! All beri taribol! But wetaminit! It is *beri nesesari* to put this into perspective.

Velasquez's mangling of English and Tagalog through Kenkoy reflected the times and the country's easing into American rule. Although annexed to America in 1898, the 300 years under Spain could not be easily shrugged off.

Until the late 1920s, Spanish was still spoken (as it is still today in certain pockets of society), creating curious constructions that combined Spanish, English and Tagalog. One construction from a Kenkoy balloon went: "*Bay-gali, no puede akong mag-islaming mamaya, kulang ang kas ko!*" It included English and Spanish expressions in a Tagalog construction with some Tagalog words inserted.

While some may cringe, Ateneo de Manila University professor Soledad Reyes views the carabao English of Mickey Mouse look-alike Kenkoy, as "a reflection of the Filipinos' struggle for ascendancy in the 1930s."

Readers, Reyes theorizes, probably viewed Kenkoy's bastardization of English as a triumph of the native, contributing to the strip's popularity, and lodging itself in the depths of Philippine popular culture.

As the Pinoy komiks industry flourished, Kenkoy, in Tony Velasquez's hand, never ceased. Its incarnations in print evolved from a four-frame black-and-white cartoon to a 10-frame full-color page then an entire digest.

From an idea in Romualdez Ramos' head that took shape in Tony Velasquez's hand, Kenkoy has become a classic, the point of departure for all local illustrators, graphic novelists and cartoonists alike.

The comic character has influenced generations of Filipinos who readily recognize the word *kenkoy*. The word has spread throughout the archipelago cutting through generations, taking on meanings ranging from "funny," "slapstick," "clumsy" to the thing which brought it to life—"komiks."

It was on Jan. 11, 75 years ago when Kenkoy started being *kenkoy*, and the word has not been ordinary since.

KENKOY created the pidgin speech that has become the Pinoyspeak of today.

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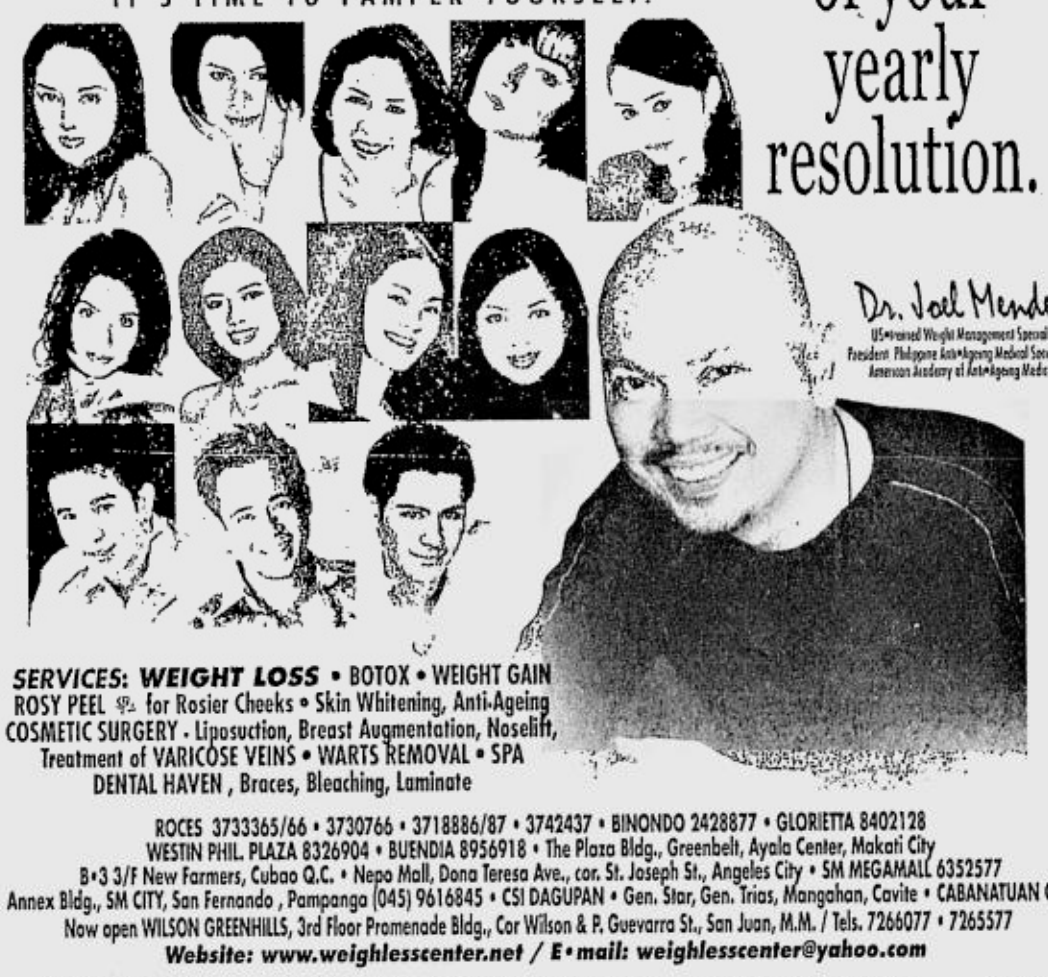

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Small Pinoys are heritage heroes

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

RESPONDING to my last column, "In 2004, Wake Up to the Splendor of the Philippines," a reader from Pagadian City agrees that "there are numerous beautiful spots close to our abodes. It really depends on the beholders to appreciate the natural and cultural splendor that surrounds them."

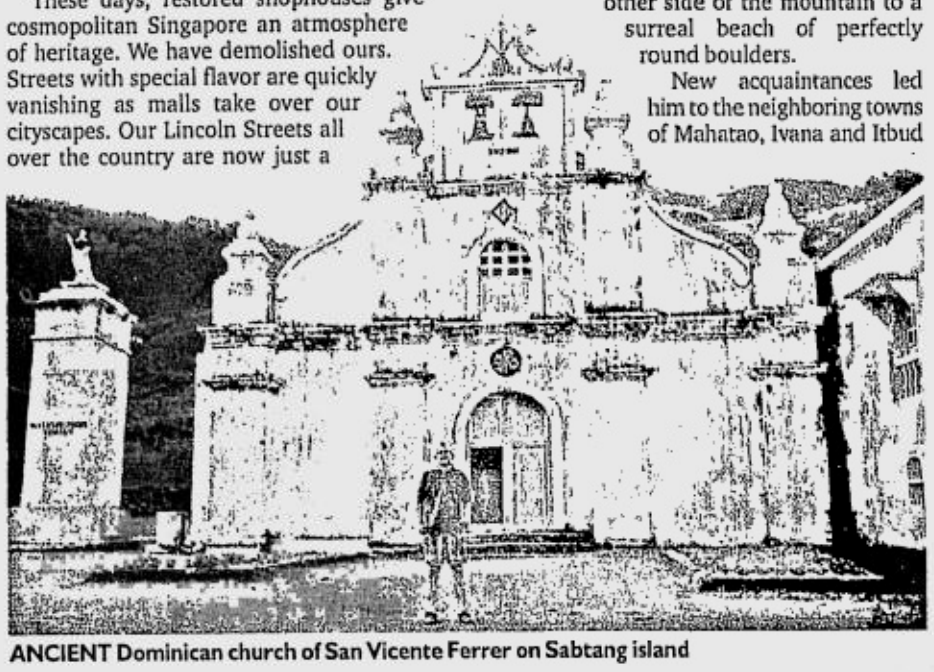
He continues, "There's a street in Cebu near the Carbon Market—Lincoln Street—where there is a row of small guitar shops. It is really fascinating to see those guitars, the handiwork of Cebuanos, hanging in the storefronts.

"Some years back, I had the chance to go to Singapore. As part of the visit I had the opportunity to visit rows of old two-story houses specially preserved by the government. Old as they are, they comprise an important part of the culture of cosmopolitan Singapore."

In the Cebu of my childhood, I clearly remember periodic visits to Lincoln Street to look for guitars. There were rows of shops with guitars hanging everywhere. Men crafted guitars inside the shops, handing over the completed ones to women who patiently varnished them. Instead of hawking, there were a lot of singing and guitar playing on the narrow street. How else could you show off the quality of the instrument?

Now that I think of it, Lincoln Street (and many similar streets in the Philippines) were shophouses in the Asian tradition of families living above their place of business, similar to the architecture found in Singapore, Penang, Pekalongan and other Asian cities.

These days, restored shophouses give cosmopolitan Singapore an atmosphere of heritage. We have demolished ours. Streets with special flavor are quickly vanishing as malls take over our cityscapes. Our Lincoln Streets all over the country are now just a memory.



ANCIENT Dominican church of San Vicente Ferrer on Sabtang island

Outstanding

There are Filipinos who refuse to make their distinctive culture vanish into memory. How outstanding it is to see Filipinos who regard their heritage with strong pride of place, as a Frenchman who teaches French (what else?) in a Manila school discovered when he visited Batanes late last year.

In Basco, Monsieur checked in a modest lodge that was the best accommodation available in town. There he met Noli, a nationally acclaimed photographer who was in his hometown for a short visit. Realizing that the Frenchman was a photography enthusiast, Noli kindly lent him a tripod to use during his Batanes stay and showed him where the most photogenic spots were.

Monsieur befriended many locals who showed him around their town, bringing him to Mt. Iraya, a dormant volcano at the edge of Basco, recommending an uphill trek to the summit past pre-Spanish colonial archaeological sites and descending on the other side of the mountain to a surreal beach of perfectly round boulders.

New acquaintances led him to the neighboring towns of Mahatao, Ivana and Itbud to see the fabulous scenery. A windswept road (the only highway on Batan Island) cuts into a mountain cliff that suddenly drops to the sea, threading its way to the three towns where rows of traditional Ivatan stone-and-cogon houses survive. A patchwork of hedgerows on high mountain slopes backdrops the towns. Abandoned *ijangs* (pre-Spanish colonial citadels) stand in ruin on distant mountaintops.

Nowhere in the country is there a landscape like that, and his Ivatan acquaintances proudly made sure he realized that.

Unforgettable

He crossed to remote Itbayat Island where Eling, who lives in the town of Mayan Centro, put him up in her house for a few nights, cooked him Ivatan food, introduced him to Ivatan folklore, and showed him where to go on the lonely and rocky island.

To complete the Batanes experience, a storm stranded him on the islands. Locals once again came to the rescue, booking him on an air taxi that arrived in Laoag in time to connect to the next commercial flight to Manila so he would not miss too many days of classes.

The Batanes experience, he told me, was unforgettable. The landscaspe and seascape were breathtaking, but it was his personal contact with the Ivatan people who took pride in sharing their heritage that made a deep impression on him.

Discovering Batanes through its people, he imbibed their pride of place and got a first-hand feel of their way of life. Now he is an avowed Batanes fan.

We should hear more stories like this one so we learn to develop pride of place for what we have. I am positive that Monsieur was not the only visitor to the country to have made an unforgettable connection with the Filipino people and their unparalleled cultural landscape.

What makes this story stand out is the sense of pride of the local host. Sadly, not too many Pinoys still have that sense of pride these days.

We Pinoys could do with much more pride of place. It is a concept sorely missing in the mindset of many Filipinos that shows in the total disregard we have for our heritage and our environment.

VALUGAN Bay with its eerie round rocks

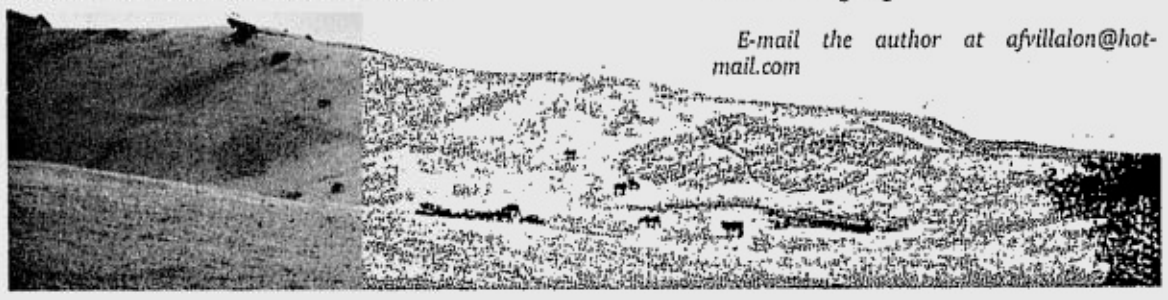
Cebu's quaint Lincoln Street and Batanes' spectacular sights are kept alive by small folks

SEA and spray on Sabtang island

With a sense of pride of place, our Lincoln Streets and Batanes islands will be sure to survive in an unadulterated, authentic state. There would be no issue with demolishing the Jai Alai building in Manila, it simply wouldn't be done. We would bring life back into Intramuros and not allow Intramuros to be trivialized into a Wow! destination with little respect for its heritage.

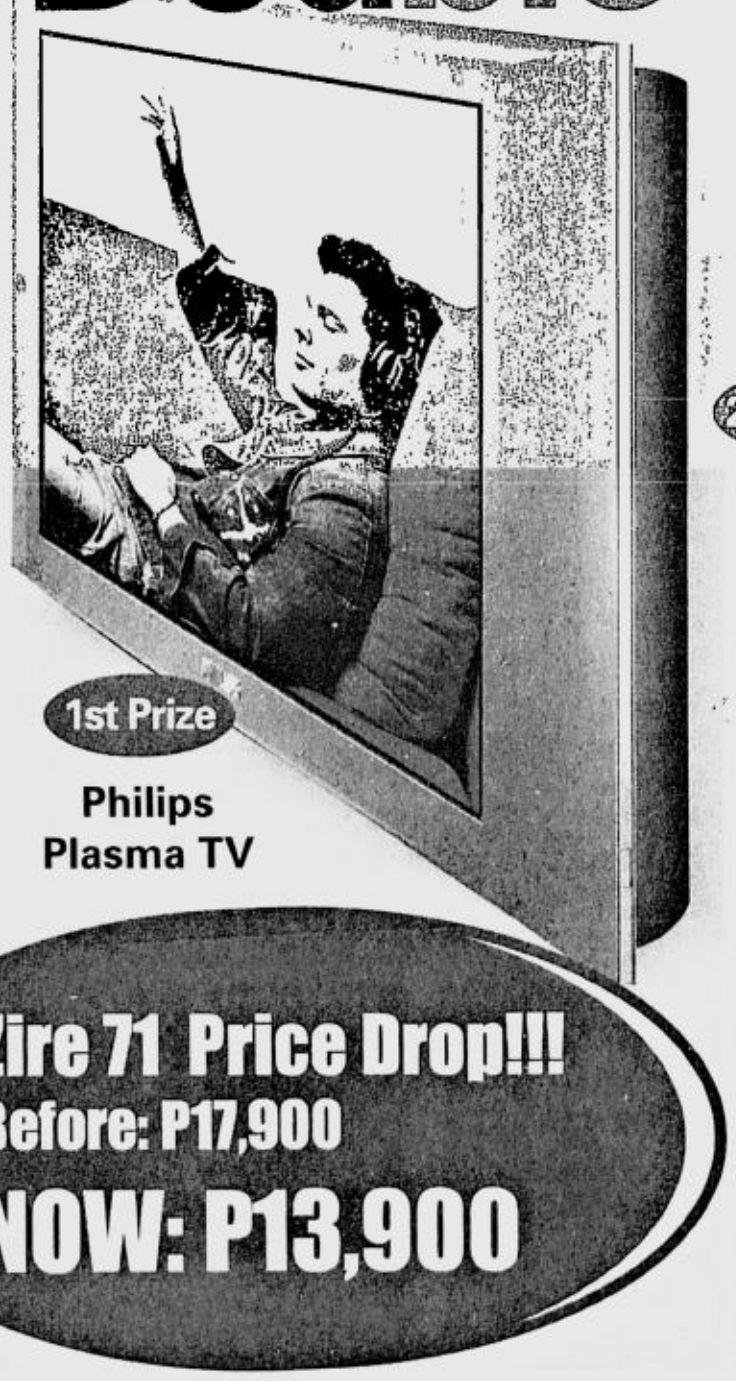
Pride of place means respect for our heritage, and respect means that our heritage will ground us as we move into the globalized 21st century. It also means that we will not allow our heritage to vanish at the same fast rate that it is going.

E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com



PASTURELAND in Batanes

Double Celebration![1]



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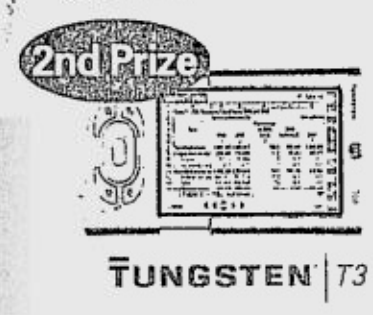

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3463 Series of 2003

The passion of collecting

"Consuming Passions: Philippine Collectibles"
Edited by Jaime C. Laya
Anvil Publishing Inc., 2003, 390 pp.

By Ophelia A. Dimalanta
Contributor

REVIEW

THIS massive, handsomely packaged book on the art/hobby of collecting is a veritable collector's item. It was conceived, edited, sweated over, and nudged into fruition by no less than Dr. Jaime C. Laya, whose "Letras y Figuras: Business in Culture, Culture in Business" won the National Book Award for Non-Fiction in 2001. Laya was assisted in the work by the inspiring conspiracy between Karina Bolasco of Anvil Publishing Inc. and Linda Panlilio, herself a collector of what is beautiful to behold and touch, and therefore true.

The book is all about collectibles, collectors, and collecting. The author-collectors are not only experts in collecting, but possess the writing skills, descriptive and narrative, to make their pieces not only informative but also pleasurable reading.

The essays are products of the collectors' passionate research as well as intimate peeks into their own personal lives, their styles swinging from the scholarly to the racy, witty, and even at times, quite literary. Quite entertaining even for the uninitiated, although there are times the personal narrative flow tends to overwhelm functional detailing.

The contributors are an impressive array: Erlinda Panlilio, Jesus Peralta, Martin Tinio Jr., Alejandro Roces, Juan Gatbonton, Esperanza Gatbonton, Armand Fabella, Mario Que, John Silva, Jonathan Best, David Baradas, Lourdes Montinola, Ramon Villegas, Robert Lane, Jose Dalisay Jr., Eric Caruncho, Floy Quintos, Josefina Manahan, Larry Gotauco, Corazon Alvina, Richard Lopez, Gilda Cordero Fernando, Manuel Quezon III, Ana Maria Harper, Thelma Sioson-San Juan, Antonio Manahan, and of course, Jaime Laya himself.

The anthology is divided into sections according to the nature of the subject/object: objects associated with beliefs and rituals, objects read and studied, visuals, textiles and accessories, miscellaneous utility, decorative and memento items, memorabilia and commemorative pieces.

Welcome levity

The introductions are provided by Laya; they are characterized by a welcome levity and cozy style. There is a delightful article on the joy of collecting by Panlilio, and a perceptive one on the difference between private and institutional collecting by Jess Peralta.

Functionally interwoven in the sections are "By the Way" articles that augment, elaborate, and round up the major articles, written mostly by the editor. The photographs and illustrations add to the pleasurable read.

Written without heavy-handed esoterics, the consuming passions are motley: *santos, anting-anting*, stamps and postcards, maps and books, paintings, photographs, artifacts, textiles, particularly *piña*, jewelry, furniture, mats and baskets, fountain pens, vintage records, ceramics, Philippine coins, farm implements, medals, even ancestral homes.

The book provides a wealth of information on the country's history and culture. As Laya says, "Here is history concretized and made more real and palpable... made, made use of, and appreciated." The collections are not only significant because of their tangible beauty but also because they are fraught with symbolism and evocative memories that reflect the very ethos of the country.

One learns that collecting is a serious commitment fortified by love and lore, as well as special personal qualities such as patience, perspicacity, capacity for keen discernment, taste, and curiosity. And yes, quite importantly, the right lineage, money, time, and all that space!

Those who are not as endowed will have to settle for the less demanding but not necessarily less addicting preoccupation of viewing the collectibles in the spacious homes of collector-friends and in museums here and abroad.

In the course of these sojourns and museum-hopping, I learned that some forms of defacements, peeling-offs, scratches, cracks do not really detract from the value of the artifacts, the so-called "wounded artifacts." In fact, they show the artifacts' essential "openness," a vulnerability to the ravages of time, the human touch and the violence of history. Openness provides the artifacts "resonance and wonder," to use the terms of Stephen Greenblatt.

In the same manner, this treasure of a book is a contribution to the resonating of the chords of history, evoking a sense of wonder over these tangibles, reminders of our cultural heritage as passed on from one given time to another in a timeless flow.

Pens for every pursuit or occasion

AS ANY quality-conscious pen user can certify, Rotring is an esteemed brand because of its admirable performance features.

Rotring's ECG or Ergonomic Cushion Grip, for instance, gives comfort and an assured grasp because of its spoil-resistant surface region.

The Art Pen is an elegant fountain pen made especially for those who wish to express eye-catching character through handwriting. The Core set of pens possess robust barrels, and among this selection of writing items is a fountain pen specially designed to be ambidextrous—both for left-handed and right-handed individuals.

Meanwhile, the ethereal Esprit series is characterized by lightness and simplicity, providing freedom of movement.

Rotring's classic curved, lacquer-finished Freeway pens, on the other hand, are designed to cater to easy writing for long periods. The Initial pens showcase an array of mechanical pencils, rollerballs, and leak-proof fountain pens in both its metal and resin sets.

The fine writing instruments under the Newton group combine straightforward classic designs with practical features, including push-button mechanisms, and a variety of points for different line widths.

There's also the Multipen assemblage of writing tools, which combines four different separate refills—a ballpoint pen, a mechanical pencil, a highlighter, and a touchscreen cartridge—into one handy survival pen.

The Skynn set is aimed at younger people who can easily connect with the pleasures of these cutting-edge pens. And finally, there's Primus, which is designed to foster penmanship skills in children, as it adopts to their desired writing positions.

These pens come in well-crafted housings of brass, resin, aluminum, chrome, or a combination of these and other materials.

UST holds writers forum

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas will hold the Thomasian Writers Forum on Jan. 23-24 at the Tanghalang Teresita Quirino of the UST Graduate School. The theme of the forum is "Philippine Literature: A Reckoning and an Envisioning."

Organized by the UST Graduate School's Center for Professional Development and Consultancy Services in collaboration with the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies, the forum will gather leading UST alumni and faculty writers nationwide to discuss the sources of strength of Philippine literature and the challenges facing it.

To deliver the keynote address is Msgr. Rodolfo Villanueva of the Archdiocese of Cebu, the real name of "Renato Madrid," author of the acclaimed novels "DevilWings" and "Mass for the Death of an Enemy." He will tackle the topic, "UST as a Literary School and Movement."

Other speakers: Jose Wendell Capili ("Philippine Poetry in English in the New Century"); Cirilo Bautista ("The Catholic Imagination in Philippine Literature"); Bienvenido Lumbera ("The Reading and Teaching of Philippine Literature/s"); Milagros Tanlayco ("Drama and Literary Appreciation"); Zenaida French ("Local is Global: Appreciating Hiligaynon Fiction and Regional Literatures"); Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo ("New Critical Horizons in Philippine Literature"); Rina Jimenez David and Neal Cruz ("Journalism as Literature"); Erma Cuizon ("Thomasian Women of Letters"); Oscar Campomanes ("Filipino Expatriate Literature"); and Rebecca Añonuevo ("Philippine Literary Aesthetics and Spirituality").

There is a registration fee of P2,500. Students can get a discount. Call 7417416 or 7313101 loc. 4051.

Well-loved Filipino icon revisited

"MOTHER and Child of the Sunflower," by Mario Parial

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

IN THE EXHIBIT titled "Madonna and Child," (Galerie Joaquin, which opened last Yuletide season and has spilled over the New Year), the large assembly of participating artists, 13 in all, provides a good yardstick of how established and emerging artists of varied persuasions interpret the traditional Mother and Child subject.

Leading the pack is National Artist Ang Kiukok, represented with a vintage watercolor rendering, which shows his usual angular figures of the subject, whose bodies powerfully fuse and merge in the protypical Expressionist manner.

There is also Tam Austria's "Sleep My Darling, Baby," an oil painting depicting an extended family rather than just a mother and child, and set in his typical rural milieu, their lithe bodies pictorially idealized amid the lush surroundings. It is the other Austria's (Antonio) entry titled "Kambal," which proves more arresting since it shows a mother cradling in her two arms a pair of siblings, as the title suggests, done in the naïf, childlike manner of the artist.

Of more recent provenance are the works of Angelito Antonio, Mario Parial and Lydia Velasco. Antonio's four paintings on the subject show a more identifiably Pinoy rendering, figures that are clearly closer to home and hearth, with the leitmotif of kitchen gadgetry, a place where mothers reign supreme, surrounding his composition. Parial, who has done numerous works on the subject, captures a more ethereal than worldly mood, his figures like *diwatas* presiding over ricefields and brown earth profuse with sunflowers.

Velasco, who has zealously pursued the subject of women in recent shows, has three works that are more erotic than reverential, her Gauguinesque figures betraying the air of Eros in a display of flowing breasts and copious lips. Velasco also likes to show women in pairs, or in larger numbers, perhaps a sign of the bonding spirit common to our women.

The younger practitioners in the show have all done works on women, and it is therefore no surprise that Hermes Alegre , Bayani Ray Acala, Edwin Tres Reyes and Dominic Rubio pay homage to the more maternal aspect of womanhood.

While many of their works are swathed in largely decorative motif, and have expanded the usual terrain to include the tropical bounty, they need to zero in on the main subject by lessening their indulgence in decorous detail. Rubio, in particular, has to make his figures fully expressive and needs to rid them of the rich cosmetic overlay.

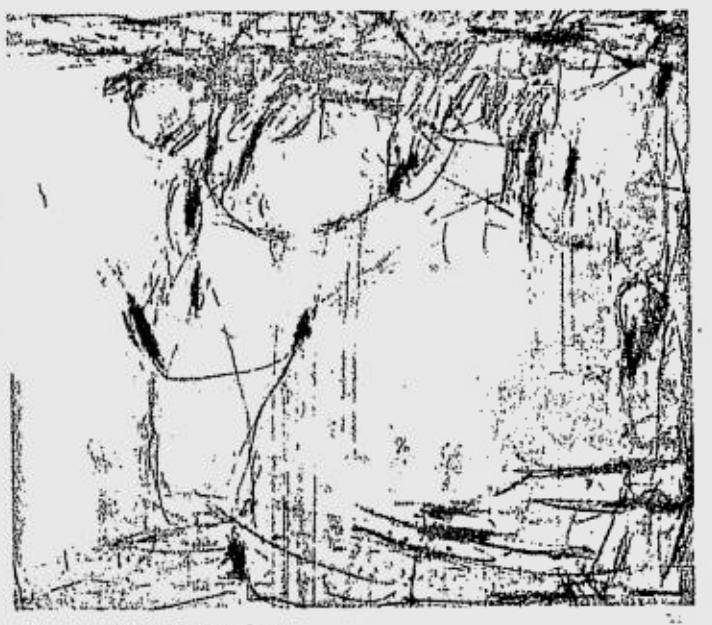
Of the younger batch of artists who need nurturing, Bernard Vista, Nell Campos and Richard Arimado are clearly still working under the heady spell of their mentors and role models. Vista's style, in particular, has yet to emerge, but the earlier he comes into his own, the better for this promising artist. Perhaps time will tell if indeed the young and emerging artists can face up to the challenge—which happens to be an icon that needs equally unswerving devotion—in their own time.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

Master sculptor's works on exhibit

A JUAN C. Flores sculpture

THE "OBRA Maestra" exhibit of the late master sculptor Juan C. Flores of Betis, Guagua, Pampanga, runs until Jan. 16 at the Ugnayan Hall of the Development Bank of the Philippines head office on Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue and Makati Avenue in Makati. Masterpieces of Flores carved in the '50s and '60s, together with the more than 70 selected wood carvings of his Kapampangan artist proteges, will be on sale at the exhibit. The show is organized with DBP by the Association of Pampanga Artists headed by its chair, Magno C. Gaza. Flores created the magnificent wood chandelier and ceiling at the Ceremonial Hall of Malacañang Palace. In 1972, US President Richard Nixon chose the bust Flores did of Nixon from among the works of more than 60 artists worldwide.



UNTITLED, by Lindsey Lee

Emerging artists at Beato Angelico

VISUAL ARTS

YOUNG and emerging alumni artists from the UST College of Fine Arts and Design team up for the group exhibit "Boundless," which opens tomorrow at 6 p.m. and runs until Feb. 6, at the Beato Angelico Gallery, G/F, Beato Angelico Building, University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila. Participating artists include Jepoy Almario, Serjohn Bato, Art Bermido, Buen Calubayan, Lindsay Lee, Mark Magistrado, Leobensant Marquez, Jaime Jesus Pacena II, Oliver Abe Ramos, Ivan Roxas, CJ Tañedo and Wesley Valenzuela.

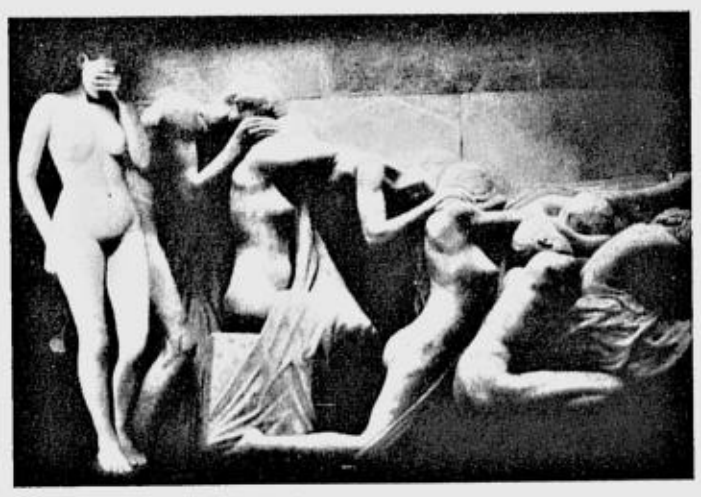
The show pays tribute to UST's fine arts school which gave birth to the modern art movement in the Philippines despite its traditional and classical approach to art education. It is a school where techniques and styles by the old masters continue to guide students in exploring art and the world.

"TRIBUTE to Hail," by Buen Calubayan

"BERDE: Kulay o Pananaw," an exhibit of artworks in various media by kaARTEhan, a women's painting group composed of alumnae-artists from the UST College of Fine Arts and Design, is on view at the Main Hall of the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences until Jan. 21. The artists include Jane Arrieta-Ebarle, Lydia Magdaluyo, Aida Magdaluyo, Nady Nacario and Bess Ida Robles. Call 7811815 or 7409718. E-mail museum@ust.edu.ph.

ROMEO Lee holds a solo exhibit dubbed "Monay Lee-sa," at the Finale Art Gallery, 4/L, Artwalk, SM Megamall A. Lee presents 32 new works. The exhibit runs until Jan 18.

TO COMPLEMENT "Essence and Symphaties," an ongoing exhibit of works by Philippine-born artists who do their art abroad, renowned filmmaker Raymond Red attempts to deconstruct national and transnational representations in media in his lecture, "Negotiating Filipino Identity in Film," on Jan 17, 2-4 p.m. (P100 admission). Call 6312417 or 4492355.



"THE ART of Grief," by Ivan Roxas

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Arts & Design

LIFESTYLE

'Balik'-Makati for Rep

MIGUEL Faustmann as the French diplomat, Rene Gallimard, with J.S. Jose as the opera singer Song Liling

We opened our first season in our new home at Onstage in Greenbelt 1 with David Henry Hwang's award-winning 'M. Butterfly'

By Bibot Amador
Contributor

WHEN we were quite unceremoniously booted out of our theater in Shangri-La (yes, I always call a spade a dirty shovel), we were hard put for a year to find a venue for our shows.

The RCBC theater housed us in the interim, but since that theater is not big enough for our musicals, we were still busy looking for a home where we could do both straight plays and musicals.

Eleven years ago, the management of Shangri-La asked us to move to Mandaluyong and be one of their "anchor" tenants, and we agreed.

After over a decade, I guess the anchor became butter and disappeared.

But dwelling on remembrances of ugly things past has never been our style at Rep, so we just kept praying and looking around.

Enter Onstage at Greenbelt 1, meetings and negotiations. We still couldn't make ends meet.

Then enter Globe Telecom to the rescue to handle the shortfall, and we were back in business.

So now, we have nine months of the year for Rep at Ayala Land's theater, now named "Rep's Globe Theater at Onstage," and we are back in Makati with a warm welcome from Mayor Jejomar Binay, who believes that cultural devel-

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SMART PasaLoad
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Ano ang PasaLoad?
A: Ito ang kauna-unahang subscriber-to-subscriber load transfer service para sa mga SMART Buddy at Talk 'N Text users. Ngayon, maari nang magpasa ng ₱10.00 sa mga kaibigan galing sa sarili mong load!

Q: What are the charges for this service?
A: ₱1.00 per message sent para sa sender. Kaya, kung nagpasa siya ng ₱10.00 load, siya ay mababawasan ng ₱11.00 per send (₱10 + ₱1 SMS fee) sa airtime balance niya. Hindi ito puwedeng ibawas sa free text allocation.

Q: May ₱1.00 charge ba ang recipient?
A: Walang charge para sa recipient.

Q: Ilang beses ako puwedeng mag-transfer ng ₱10 load?
A: Puwede kang mag-transfer ng ₱10 load as often as you want basta may airtime balance ka na at least ₱11.00 (i.e. ₱10 for the load and ₱1 for the SMS fee).

Q: What is the expiry of the load?
A: Ang PasaLoad ₱10 ay may 24-hour expiry. Kung ang recipient ay may remaining load, ang expiry ng remaining load ay hindi magbabago.

Q: Kung pinasahan ako ng Load ng tatlong beses sa loob ng isang araw (halagang ₱30) ano na ang expiry ng load ko?
A: Kahit na ₱30 na total Load ang ipinasa, ang expiry ay mananatiling 24 hours pa rin bawat ₱10 Load na ipinasa.

Q: What is the SIM validity?
A: Hindi magbabago ang SIM validity.

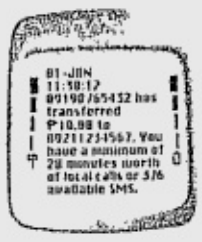
Q: Can a postpaid subscriber also transfer load balance to a prepaid subscriber?
A: The service is not yet available to postpaid subscribers.

Q: Puwede pa bang i-pasa ang load na natanggap mula sa iba pang Smart Buddy o Talk 'N Text subscriber?
A: Yes.

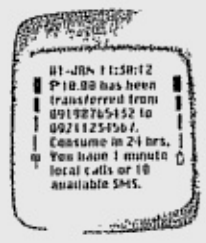
Q: Ano ang mangyayari kapag nagkamali sa pagtext ng number ang sender (naipadala sa ibang Smart o Talk 'N Text number)? Pwede pa bang mabalik ang Load?
A: Ang transaction ay matutuloy at hindi na pwedeng maibalik ang Load.

Q: Ano ang text na makukuha ng subscriber sa PasaLoad transaction?
A:

TEXT for SENDER:



TEXT for RECIPIENT:



Q: Ano naman ang mangyayari kapag nagkamali sa pagtext ng number ang sender (Postpaid, non-Smart Buddy or Talk 'N Text prepaid number, non-existing number, incomplete number)?
A: Hindi matutuloy ang transfer at hindi mababawasan ang load ng sender.

Q: In case na walang text notification na dumating, paano malalaman ng sender kung successful ang load transfer?
A: Para malaman kung successful ang load transfer, pwedeng mag-balance inquiry thru SMS for free (1515 send to 214) or by calling 1515 (w/ ₱1.00 charge).

Q: How else can a subscriber inquire about the service?
A: Prepaid subscribers can call 888-1111 (landline) or *888 (toll-free via Smart mobile phone) or text PASA to 888 (₱1.00 per message sent).

MONT BLANC

WELCOME
THE NEW MONTBLANC SHOP IS NOW OPEN AT LEVEL-2, PADRE FAURA WING, ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA. YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COME.
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Makati (632) 8133739 • Shangri-La Plaza (632) 6334636 • Alabang Town Center (632) 8505532 • Harrison Plaza (632) 5211040 • Cubao (632) 9112401 • and in Montblanc Shops • Rockwell Power Plant Mall (632) 8982347 • Robinsons Place Manila (632) 5284710

FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are committed to your career and will make great sacrifices for it. You believe in traditional values and have your own set of ethics that you live by. You become completely absorbed by whatever you embrace. Your commitment inspires others. The year ahead is full of fresh starts for you.
Birthdate of: Oliver Platt, actor; Kirstie Alley, actress; Walter Mosley, author.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Start this week off with the sure knowledge that you can improve your employment scene this year. (Because you can.) You will either get a better job or improve your current one.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Plan for a vacation some time this year. Opportunities for fun, romance, pleasure and creativity abound! Children might be of particular significance to you now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You will have a happier family environment. Everything having to do with your private life, your home and your personal world gets better!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): First comes the thought; then comes the deed. The deed becomes habit, and habit hardens into character. That's why you must watch your thoughts with care.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's a good thing your earnings will increase this year, because you're probably spending a lot of money as well. (And you were a big spender anyhow!)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Lucky Jupiter is in your sign until September. This happens only once every 12 years. That's why the year ahead is going to be quite fortunate for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Many of you will broaden your spiritual world this year. This could be through religion, philosophy or just contemplation. You want to know what really matters in life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Increased popularity with friends, groups, clubs and organizations continues and even increases in the year ahead. You're popular!

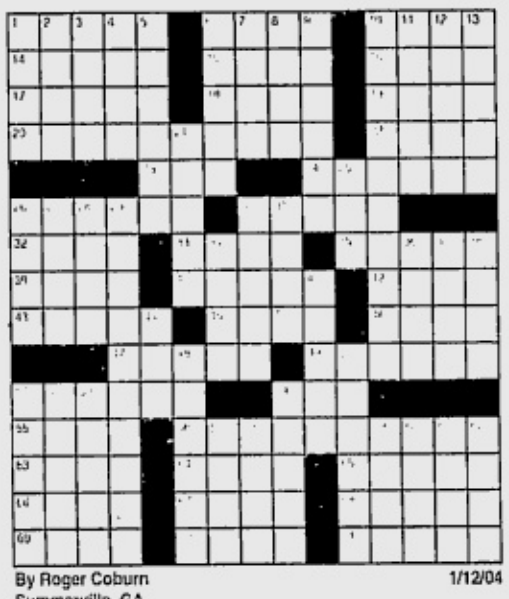
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Moneybags Jupiter is at high noon in your chart for most of the year. This completely favors all your career opportunities. Be bold—go after whatever you want. (Sometimes wishing makes it so.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can look forward to increased opportunities connected to travel, education, publishing, legal matters and expanding your awareness of the world in general. People are starting to take you seriously.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Inheritances, gifts and goodies come to you from others this year. Not only that; favors and advantages from friends are likely. Don't be afraid to expect a miracle!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your closest relationships will definitely improve this year. In addition, your ability to deal with the general public will also be more enjoyable and more skillful.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Roger Coburn
Summerville, GA

1/12/04

ACROSS
1 Ms. Rogers St. Johns
6 Adored one
10 Rogers or Astaire
14 U.S. neighbor
15 River in St. Petersburg
16 "Darling _"
17 Battery electrode
18 Hammer part
19 Tel _-Jaffa
20 Tyne's newspaper?
22 Caracas cat
23 "My country ... of..."
24 Aerie youngster
26 Lost-package inquiry
30 Infield covers
32 Crown of light
33 Trolley car
35 Many times
39 Comparison phrase
40 Draft-animal ties
42 In real time
43 Jones or Lee
45 Ecological cycle
46 Haley or Trebek
47 DeGeneres or Greene
49 Acting ruler
51 Ornamental tree with pods
54 Caesar's eggs
55 Actor Baldwin
56 Lena's honker?
63 Pasolini picture
64 Lofty poems
65 Spine-tingling
66 Supply of BB's
67 After-bath wear
68 City SW of York
69 Wet thoroughly
70 Part of QED
71 Blackthorn berries

DOWN
1 Part of USMA
2 Ivey or Elcar
3 Hydroxyl compound
4 Lord's wife
5 "_ Fideles"
6 Peruvian people
7 Where heroes are made?
8 White House office shape
9 Attorney
10 Fannie's tab?
11 Competitor
12 Best of the best
13 Chunk of the fairway
21 "_ Rotten Scoundrels"
25 PFC's address
26 In _ day and age
27 Coarse file
28 Prefix meaning height
29 Alistair's chef?
30 Occupied
31 USA part
34 Stood up
36 Roof piece
37 Divisible by two
38 Waiting-room summons
41 Dish up
44 Actor Wallach
48 City near Rawalpindi
50 Art stands
51 Tijuana homes
52 Texas shrine
53 Diamond of "Night Court"
54 Beginning
57 Bouquet
58 Singer McEntire
59 Command to Fido
60 Nabisco treat
61 Commute
62 Highland loch

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

G	U	P	P	I	E	S	■	D	E	I	C	E	R	S
O	N	L	E	A	V	E	■	E	R	R	A	T	I	C
S	W	A	N	N	E	D	■	C	R	A	N	A	C	H
S	O	T	S	■	■	A	P	R	O	N	■	G	A	L
I	V	E	■	A	C	T	E	E	R	■	H	E	R	O
P	E	A	■	I	R	E	N	E	■	W	O	R	D	S
S	N	U	G	N	E	S	S	■	J	I	R	E	O	S
■	■	■	E	C	S	T	A	S	I	E	S	■	■	■
S	C	E	N	E	S	■	C	O	L	L	E	G	I	S
C	A	V	E	S	■	H	O	L	E	D	■	H	O	T
O	R	E	S	■	L	O	L	O	R	S	■	E	R	A
U	R	N	■	R	O	M	A	N	■	■	M	O	G	■
R	A	P	T	U	R	E	■	G	R	A	T	I	N	G
G	R	A	N	D	E	E	■	A	U	G	U	S	T	E
E	A	R	N	E	R	S	■	S	T	E	N	T	O	R

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1/12/04

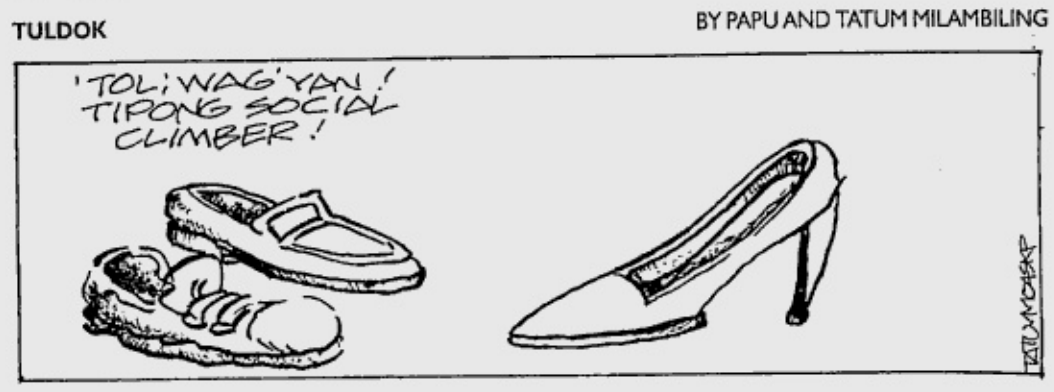
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

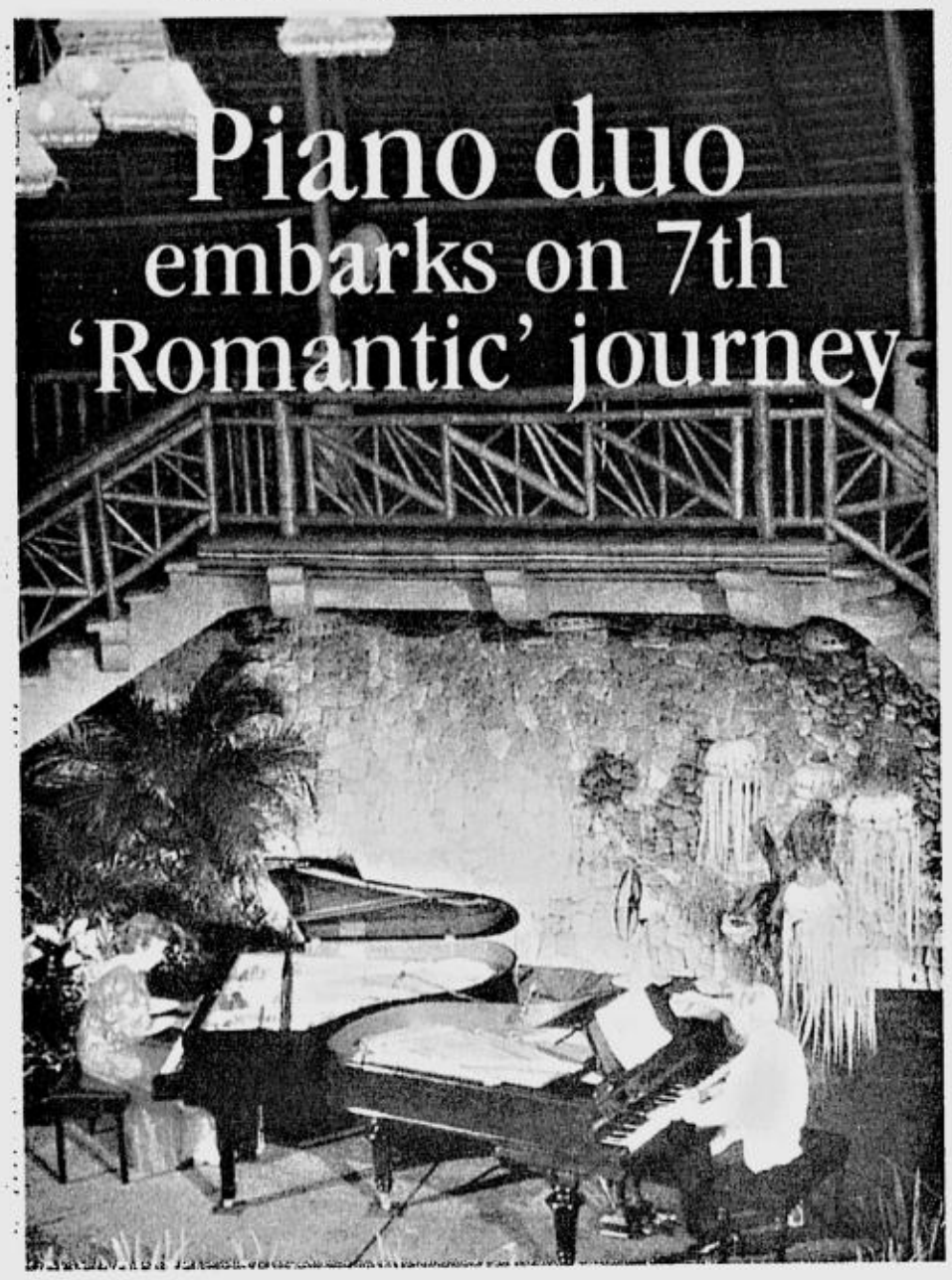
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



Piano duo embarks on 7th 'Romantic' journey



A VIEW from the bamboo balcony side of the Villa Escudero concert hall in San Pablo City with pianists Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes framed by ornamental plants on stage

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

PIANISTS Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Reynaldo G. Reyes are "going" on the seventh journey of the Romantic Piano Concerto this 2004.

The New Year literally starts with a bang as the formidable team performs daily Jan. 6-21 in educational and international institutions in Metro Manila and Los Baños, Laguna.

Imelda O. Cojuangco is the journey's honorary chair. Sponsors are Petron Corp., Victorino/Pilar Cusi Awards, Inc., dzFE 98.7, The Master's Touch and other government and private sectors.

In an intimate press launch at her residence in Magallanes Village, Santamaria said the initial performance on Jan. 6 would mark her and Reyes' 101 performance as a duo. Hosting their performances since Jan. 6 were the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, Philippine High School for the Arts, Philippine Women's University, Lyceum of the Philippines, Museo Pambata and VMV Hypoallergenics. They will perform today at the University of Asia and the Pacific, and at De La Salle University-Manila (Jan. 13), Asian Institute of Management (Jan. 14), St. Stephen's High School (Jan. 15), German Embassy (Jan. 16), Pasig Museum and Music News and Features (Jan. 17), San Carlos Seminary (Jan. 18), International Rice Research Institute (Jan. 19), St. Paul College (Jan. 20) and Sisters of Mary (Jan. 21).

Santamaria added that since they started in January 2001, they had made six national tours, performed 100 concerts in 78 cities and towns all over the country, were seen by 100,000 live audiences and millions more on television.

The duo also performed internationally in Royal Palm Beach, Florida; Baltimore, Maryland; Bangkok, Thailand; Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.

For the January series, the team will perform works of western classical composers as well as Filipino masters. The foreign repertoire includes compositions by Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin, Grieg, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Saint-Saens, Schumann and Tchaikovsky. Filipino compositions consist of works by Abelardo, Buencamino and Santiago.

For its educational and cultural value, the "journey" has been endorsed by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Department of Education, Commission for Higher Education, Department of Tourism, Department of Interior and Local Government, National Parks Development Committee, and NBN Channel 4.

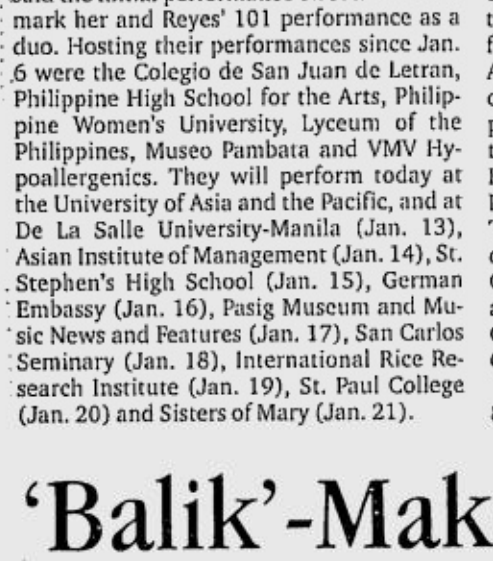
Call 7217355 or 8527365.

'Balik'-Makati for Rep

From page D1

opment should go hand in hand with material progress.

We opened our first season last Friday with David Henry Hwang's award-winning "M. Butterfly" to appreciative audiences.



J.S. Jose (center) as the enigmatic diva Song Liling with Amiel Mendoza, Mackee Serra, PJ Rebullida and Niccolo Manahan

The play stars Miguel Faustmann, J.S. Jose, Ana Bitong, Jeremy Domingo, Pheona Baranda alternating with Banaue Miclat, Tachie Billano, Ku Aquino, Niccolo Manahan, Amiel Mendoza, Mackee Serra, and PJ Rebullida.

The play is directed by Baby Barredo, with sets by Miguel Faustmann and costumes of Song Liling by Edgar San Diego.

"M. Butterfly" will be followed by "Fame —The Musical," "Dracula" and the rip-roaring comedy, "Caught In The Net."

Travel book launching

THE LATEST travel book of Amadís Ma. Guerrero, "A Stun of Jewels," will be launched on Jan. 15 at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Art Plaza, 6 p.m.

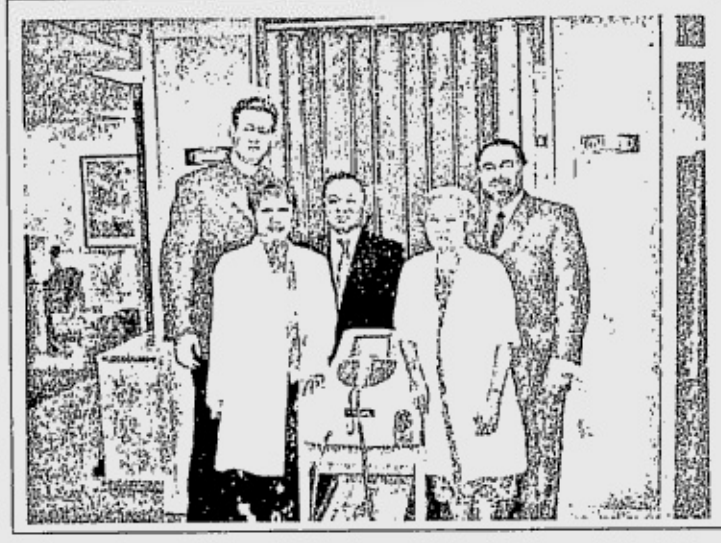
FIRST RELUME REPIGMENTATION PHOTOTHERAPY SYSTEM NOW AT THE A.T. REYES CENTER FOR DERMATOLOGY & LASER SURGERY

With **Dr. Michael Gold** as guest of honor the Relume Repigmentation Phototherapy was launched 7 December 2003. **Dr. Angelita T. Reyes** and **Dr. Carmencita E. Salud**, Dermatologist of the Center were in attendance. Other Staff members of the center were also present.

Relume Repigmentation Phototherapy is ideal for the treatment of Leukoderma, mature stretch marks and various hypopigmented skin conditions such as acne scars, burn, post surgical scars and laser resurfaced skin.

Obtained from **LUMENIS**, the number one Medical Light and Laser-based Company all over the world, through its representative **KITAL PHILIPPINES CORPORATION**, it is the only Relume Repigmentation Phototherapy System in the country so far. It compliments the other lasers of the center the **Vasculight Elite System, Carbon Dioxide Silktouch Laser, Carbon Dioxide Feathertouch Laser, Light Sheer Diode Laser** for permanent hair reduction, **Quantum Skin Rejuvination** of the Intense Pulse Light System and **Versapulse Laser** for tattoos, cherry angiomata, pigmentation, etc. It also has the **Vibradermabrasion**, one of the latest Micro-Dermabrasion device. The center is well known to provide a high standard of Dermatology & Laser Surgery service to the community.

A.T.Reyes Center for Dermatology & Laser Surgery is located at Suites 1001- 1002 Medical Plaza Building, corner of Amorsolo & Dela Rosa Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City with telephone numbers 812-45-61; 819-1685; 819-3398; 867-28-51



During the Lauching :
(Front L-R) Dr. Carmencita E.Salud-Consultant Dermatologist, Dr. Angelita T. Reyes-Dermatologist Chairman & President of ATR Center for Dermatology & Laser Surgery
(Back L-R) Mr. Doron Glazer - General Manager of Kital Philippines Corp.,Mr. Emerson Fung, Regional Manager of Lumenis Inc., & Dr. Michael Gold - The Guest of Honor a Dermatologist from Nashville, Tennessee

ADVT

Join! Search for Miss Silka 2004

MECHANICS:
1. All natural born females residing in the Philippines between 18 - 24 years old meeting the criteria below are invited to join the search for Miss Silka 2004:
   - fair complexion
   - at least 5'3" in height
   - with pleasing personality of good moral character
   - College level or College graduate

   *PROMO STARTS DECEMBER 1, 2003 UNTIL MARCH 31, 2004
2. Entries have to be mailed with the following requirements enclosed:
   - one (1) label or empty box carton of any Silka product
   - Bio-data including name, address, contact number and signature
   - Vital statistics including height and weight
   - 3R size close-up colored picture
   - 4R size full-body colored picture
3. Entries have to be mailed to the following address:
   Search for Miss Silka 2004
   c/o PBS ADVERTISING
   Dolmar Building, 1122 Perez Street,
   cor. U.N. Avenue, Paco Manila
4. Selection Process:
   - There will be four (4) qualification rounds held before the day of Miss Silka 2004 Pageant.
   - For each qualification round, twenty (20) candidates will be interviewed. Three (3) will be chosen as finalists for each round – for a total of twelve (12) finalists to compete for the title of Miss Silka 2004 on the day of the pageant.
   - Selected candidates and finalists will be notified through registered mail. For those residing in remote areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, 2-way transportation fare and 1 night hotel accommodation will be provided for the participant and 1 companion.

Schedule of Events:

Event	Event Date	Last Day for Entry Submission
Qualification round # 1	January 10, 2004	December 31, 2003
Qualification round # 2	February 7, 2004	January 31, 2004
Qualification round # 3	March 6, 2004	February 29, 2004
Qualification round # 4	April 3, 2004	March 31, 2004
Miss Silka Pageant 2004	April 24, 2004	

*Only one entry per participant will be acknowledged throughout the duration of the search.
*All Silka employees, distributors, retailers and advertising agencies, including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded.

5. Awards:
   Miss Silka 2004 winner
   - Php 50,000
   - one (1) year exclusive contract with Cosmetique Asia, promoting all Silka products through mall tours, TV guesting and other PR activities
   - an exclusive date with TV Star and Silka Endorser John Lloyd Cruz

   1st runner up
   - Php 35,000
   - Silka gift pack

   2nd runner up
   - Php 25,000
   - Silka gift pack

   12 finalists chosen during the elimination rounds
   - Php 5,000
   - Silka gift pack

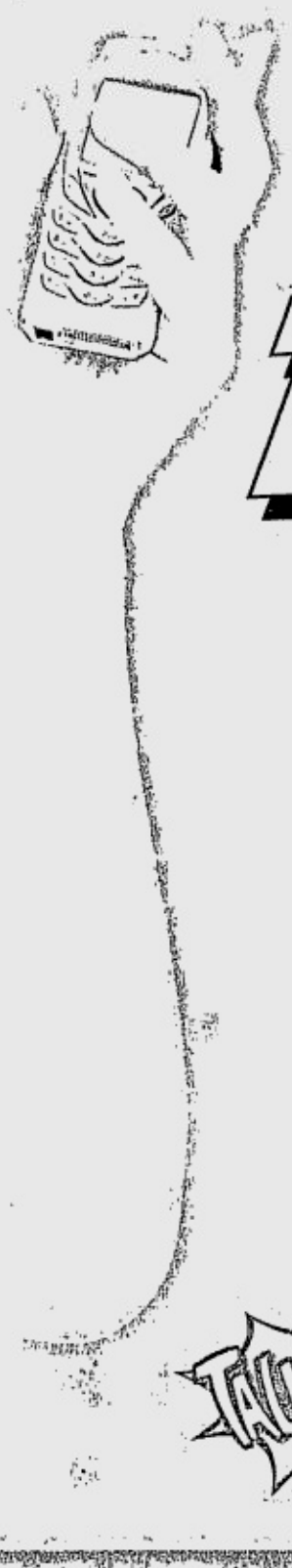
   Candidates interviewed
   - Silka gift pack

PER DOH-BFAD Permit #1041 s. 2003

Pasahan ng pasampu-sampung pisong load ng magkakaibigan!

SMART

Pasa Load



₱10

Para sa:

TALK 'N TEXT

SMART Buddy

Pasahan ng ₱10 Load ng mga kaibigan!

Kung panawid-tawag lang ang kailangan ng magkakaibigan, meron nang Smart PasaLoad! Now you can give or receive a ₱10 load sa friends mong Smart Buddy o Talk 'N Text! ₱1 lang per send, valid pa for 24 hours!

Madali lang mag PasaLoad!

Sender

<0919-XXXXXXX>

I-type lang ang number ng Smart Buddy or Talk 'N Text friends (recipient).

Sender

808

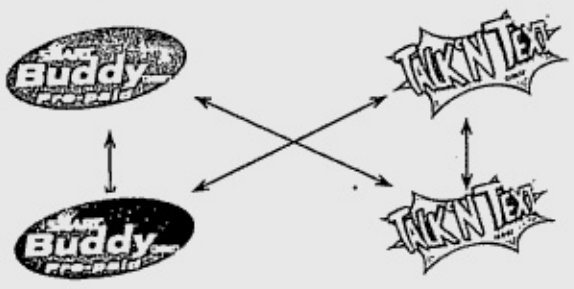
At i-send sa 808!
(Ang ₱1 per send ay hindi puwedeng ibawas sa free text allocation.)

Friend

Received ₱10

At agad na magkakaroon siya ng₱10 load na pang-text o tawag.

Puwedeng mag PasaLoad ang Smart Buddy at Talk 'N Text subscribers.



SMART
Simply Amazing!

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Text PASA to 888 (₱1.00 per message sent) or Call the SMART hotline at 888 1111, or * 888 (toll free), email us at customercare@smart.com.ph, or visit the SMART Wireless Center nearest you.

Senate reshuffle on with only 16 session days left

Story on PAGE A2

FPJ a Filipino citizen, campaigners affirm

By Christine O. Avendaño

FERNANDO Poe Jr. is a Filipino citizen "by birth and by choice."

The opposition's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino said yesterday that it was ready to show proof that its standard bearer was not an American.

Poe's campaign manager, Sen. Vicente

FPJ/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- GMs quit over chess duel SPORTS/A17
- BSP tightens rules on big loans of banks BUSINESS/B1
- Blair: Saddam's arms may never be found WORLD/A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Tuesday, January 13, 2004 ★★ 36 pages / 3 sections / vol. 19 / no. 36 P15 website: www.inq7.net

Abalos: No stopping polls

Solons oppose change of date

By Martin P. Marfil, Philip C. Tubeza and Carlito Pablo

AS RESISTANCE to any postponement of the May 10 elections stiffened yesterday, the Commission on Elections yesterday reassured the public that the elections would in fact be held.

"We can't recall the election. I mean, you can't postpone it. *Tuloy-tuloy na iyan* (It can't be stopped)," Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos told reporters. "Now others are asking if you can change the date. Maybe. Could be. But if you change the date, you have to consider the period of canvassing."

Abalos said the agency would continue to look for a solution so that the elections would proceed as scheduled. "Whatever it is, *itutuloy natin ang eleksyon* (we will proceed with the elections)."

Asked if the elections would be partially or fully automated, Abalos replied: "*Kami na ang bahala duon* (Leave that to us)."

But the petitioners behind the Supreme Court case questioning the legality of the contract to automate the polls said yesterday that an adverse ruling would not necessarily push back election day.

In a six-page urgent motion for resolution before the high court, the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines (ITFP) and the other petitioners said the Comelec had sufficient time to prepare for a manual counting of the votes should the tribunal void the contract for computerized polls.

ABALOS/ A6

Senators to tackle Cha-cha bid today

By Michael Lim Ubac and Carlito Pablo

ALTHOUGH insisting that the chamber had no more time to tackle the issue, the Senate majority bloc yesterday decided to calendar for floor debate today the controversial resolution seeking amendments to the 1987 Constitution.

Newly elected Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan told the INQUIRER that the 13-member ruling administration bloc would not want to immediately kill the resolution sponsored last year by Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws.

"In our majority caucus meeting [yesterday], we likewise agreed to calendar for consideration the proposal to amend the Constitution through a constitutional convention [Con-con]. Despite the limited time we have, we will still consider the Con-con issue," he said.

He said the issue was calendared for interpellation today because "we want a full play of arguments; we don't want to cut short an issue that is fundamental [to the nation]."

But a Senate source said the chamber had decided to debate on the resolution so as not to antagonize their counterparts in the Lower House, and jeopardize the passage of Senate bills pending in bicameral conference.

But asked about the official stand of the majority bloc on the proposal to amend the Constitution to allow for a shift to a two-party unicameral system, Pangilinan said: "We have no official

SENATORS/ A4

A YOUNG boy cries after losing his home in a fire that leveled a squatters' colony at the Baseco compound in Tondo, Manila. As many as 80,000 people were displaced, according to a fire investigator. *(See related story in Metro, Page A16.)* ERIK ARAZAS

Tondo fire leaves thousands homeless

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tarra Quismundo
Metro

INTO THE sea waded hundreds of residents to escape the fire that engulfed a squatter colony in the Port Area in Tondo, Manila.

When the eight-hour blaze was put out at 8 a.m. yesterday, almost all of the houses inside the Baseco compound were razed, leaving some 80,000 people homeless, according to a fireman.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman said only 22,000 people were rendered homeless. Damage was placed at P40 million.

The fire was the third and so far the biggest to hit the area in three years.

Investigator-on-case FO3 Emmanuel Gaspar said 2,500 houses were destroyed, leaving 12,000 families homeless. Barangay officials placed the number of residents in the compound at 100,000, according to Gaspar.

The blaze began in the home of Elizalde Eusebio at Lot 41, Block 14. Gaspar said the fire could have been started by a candle inside Eusebio's house because it had no electricity, although arson investigators have yet to speak to the owner.

The blaze quickly spread to neighboring houses.

No resident was reported killed or injured, but a firefighter from Parañaque City, identified as FO2 Arsenio Villarino, suffered gashes in the leg caused by a falling roof.

Firefighters had a hard time putting out the blaze because the passageways were too narrow for fire trucks and the area did not have fire hydrants.

Philippine Coast Guard personnel, using two fireboats, helped put out the blaze, said spokesperson Lt. Armand Balilo. The PCG's six rescue boats evacuated 579 residents who had waded into the water.

President Macapagal-Arroyo

TONDO/ A4

Politicians worry Baguio festival execs

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—What colors will the Baguio flower festival wear in February? The rainbow of former Sen. Raul Roco's infinite wardrobe of Hawaiian shirts, the red-and-white woven jackets that President Macapagal-Arroyo dons whenever she is in the city, or the dusty blue of actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s denims?

POLITICIANS/ A7

Shabu research facility surprises police raiders

By Christian V. Esguerra

FLAVORED *shabu* (methamphetamine hydrochloride) in different colors can now be produced in the country.

Police came to this conclusion after they discovered a "research and development" facility for the manufacture of shabu on Roxas Boulevard in Barangay Tambo, Parañaque City.

Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay, chief of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force, said the laboratory could manufacture different flavors and colors of the banned substance.

The laboratory in Suite 1803 of Bayview International Towers was one of three facilities that members of the task force raided yesterday in Parañaque and nearby Las Piñas City. The 20 kilos of high-grade shabu and ingredients seized from the raids were worth at least P34 billion.

Aglipay said the discovery of the Bayview laboratory was highly alarming because it indicated that transnational drug rings had expanded operations in the country.

"This is the first time we discovered a drug ring that has its own research facility," he told re-

SHABU/ A7

POLICE Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay (fifth from left) and Interior Secretary Jose Lina examine the shabu seized during a raid by members of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force on a warehouse in Las Piñas City. JESS YUSON

Bone marrow transplant survivors, kin keep faith

By Cathy Babao Guballa
Contributor

DOCTORS and survivors of bone marrow transplants (BMT) and their families formed a veritable circle of love and life during a recent gathering at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Alabang, Metro Manila.

Ten-year-old Nicole Figueroa, whose story appeared in the INQUIRER in 2002, was the very first BMT patient at the Asian Hospital. She led five other BMT survivors in a thanksgiving Mass and ceremonies that celebrated their recovery and the efforts of the doctors who patiently nurtured them back to health.

In January 2002, Nicole's mother Irene died of heart failure, leaving her and two brothers in the care of their father Ferdie. In July that same year, a week before her ninth birthday, the girl was diagnosed with Acute Myleogenous Leukemia (AML), or cancer of the blood. Her only hope was a BMT.

A top private hospital told Ferdie the procedure would cost P3 million. Desperate, the family launched a fund campaign for Nicole. With the help of many generous people who responded to a series of stories published in the INQUIRER, the Figueroas raised a little over half a million pesos.

Dr. Francis F. Lopez, a hematologist-oncologist who had just returned from training at the City of Hope Hospital in Duarte, California—ranked among the top five hospitals in the United States specializing in BMT—learned of Nicole's plight from one of her relatives.

Lopez and Dr. Allan Racho, a pediatric hematologist-oncologist, took on the girl's case and approached the AHMC to request lower rates. The hospital management responded with a reduced estimate of P1.5 million.

Lopez himself flew to Singapore to buy the medicines needed for the procedure.

Nicole's first BMT, with her 12-year-old brother Justin as donor,

BONE/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly clourainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/06/28/02

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

Senate revamped with 16 days to go

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

WITH ONLY 16 session days before Congress takes a break, the new administration bloc in the Senate proceeded to undertake a major reshuffle of the chairmanships of the powerful Senate committees, despite strong objection from the opposition.

Elected new Senate majority floor leader was Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who will also be the new chair of the Senate committee on rules replacing Sen. Loren Legarda, who has joined the opposition.

During the session yesterday, Legarda formally resigned as Senate majority leader, which was accepted by the plenary.

After a caucus of the majority bloc, it was agreed that Sen. Joker Arroyo would get the justice committee chairmanship in addition to the blue ribbon committee, which he currently heads.

The education committee will go to Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier, but he will have to let go of the health committee, which will be given to opposition Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, a doctor.

Sen. Robert Barbers will retain the chairmanship of the committee on public order and illegal drugs, but will get the ethics committee as well.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon will be amply rewarded by the majority with the committees on national defense and security, and housing, which he both chaired in the 11th Congress.

Sen. John Osmeña will get back the energy committee from Arroyo, and will also be the majority bloc's representative to the Commission on Appointments, replacing Legarda. Both positions were held by Osmeña during the 11th Congress.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. gave up the national defense committee to Biazon but will continue to chair the agriculture as well as science and technology committees.

But the opposition which wanted to maintain the status quo for the remaining 16 session days vehemently objected to the Senate reorganization since it could hamper legislative work.

Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III said it was a "major shakeup" aimed at strengthening the Macapagal administration's position in the run-up to the May polls.

Sotto said that although it was the prerogative of the majority to elect their officers, "officers of the Senate are elected by the Senate, and not just by party affiliations or by a majority-minority leadership."

"So why the change?" asked Sotto, who pointed out that the chamber lacked the time to address such a divisive issue.

"We are very worried about what can happen in the next 16 days if there is a shakeup, and this is somewhat a major shakeup because you will be talking of membership of different members of the Senate, particularly if you elect as majority leader somebody who has three or four committees," said Sotto.

He predicted the ensuing reorganization of staff members of the affected committees will hamper legislative work. "So we would like to propose that the status quo is maintained."

Pangilinan, however, dismissed this scenario, saying the new majority bloc has outlined the measures it would prioritize approval such as the proposed over P800 billion national budget for this year.

He said the budget would be sponsored on the floor next week, since the copy of the proposal was just turned over to the chamber by the House of Representatives during the Christmas holiday break.

Loren leaves post 'wisened, toughened'

By Michael Lim Ubac

VICE presidential candidate Loren Legarda yesterday formally broke her ties with the ruling administration bloc by resigning her post as Senate majority leader.

In a valedictory speech she delivered when the Senate resumed its session yesterday, the running mate of opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. said she was leaving the post "with an education worth a political lifetime."

"I relinquish this post with a sense of fulfillment ... wisened, honed and, in a sense, toughened by that experience. And with a certain confidence, a degree of maturity that prepares me for the next big challenge in my public life," she said.

Legarda took time to thank her colleagues, particularly those in the majority bloc, for the "three years of intense and collective work of the nation." She personally thanked Senate President Franklin Drilon for "his unwavering support and confidence," and for allowing her to push for advocacies "to make a better people and a better government" despite a "fluid political environment."

Legarda was the youngest senator elected in 1998, but in just three years, or in 2001, she became Senate majority floor leader, becoming the only woman to occupy the post.

Alvarez resigns as Lakas mouthpiece

AFTER BEING dumped from the administration senatorial ticket in favor of allies of deposed President Joseph Estrada, former Senator Heherson Alvarez yesterday formally resigned as spokesman of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and declined Malacañang's offer to appoint him to another position.

"I, therefore, relinquish my position as spokesman of the party. With due respect to the President, I also decline the Cabinet position that has been offered to me, either as tourism secretary or the powerful office of anti-drug czar," Alvarez said in a statement.

Alvarez said he resigned because he could not speak for some candidates "whose pronouncements and public postures contradict the ideals we had held high and fought for in the impeachment that led to Edsa II."

He, however, did not resign as a member of the ruling Lakas-CMD.

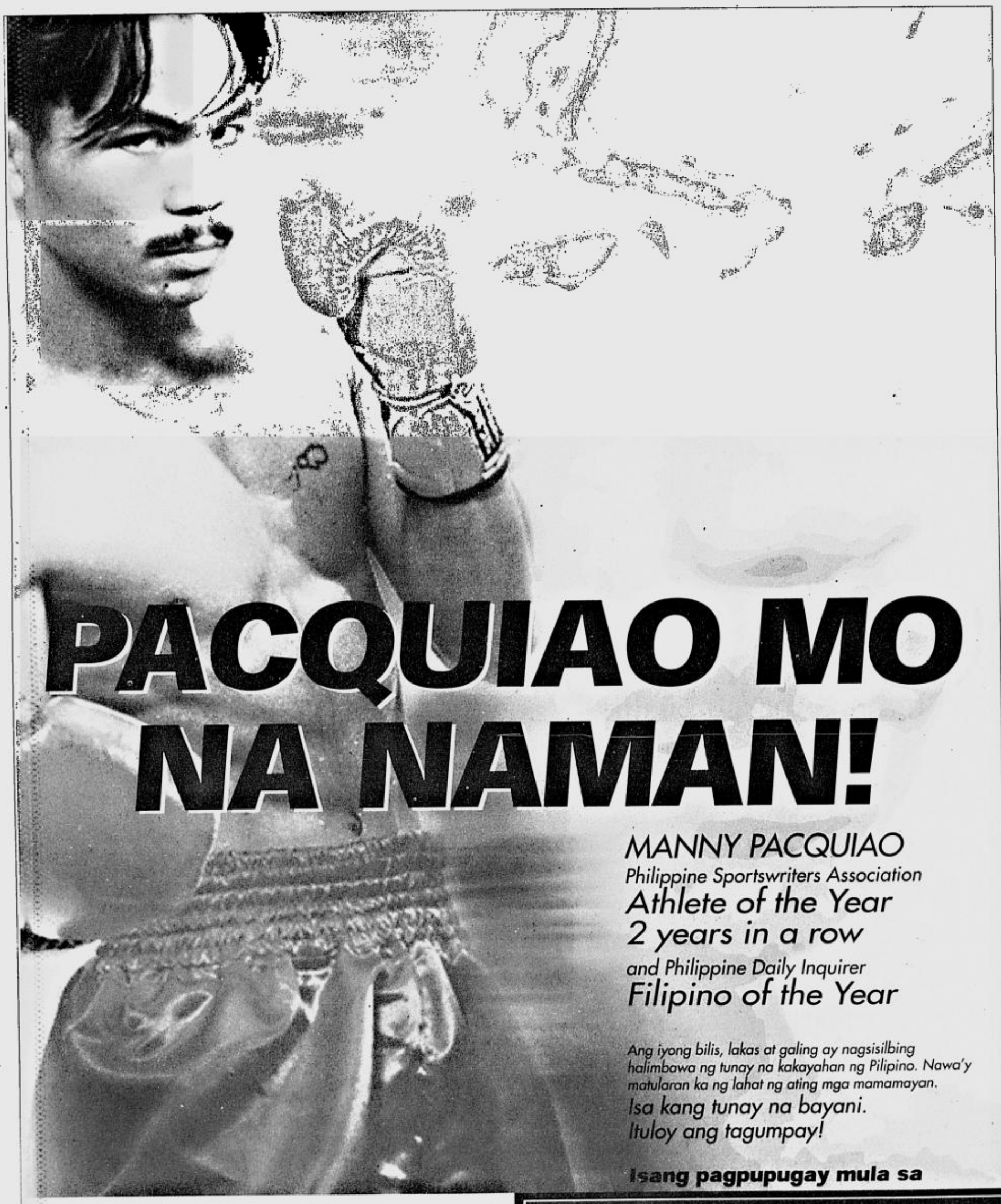
Alvarez said he would pursue his senatorial bid as an "independent" candidate if only to champion the fight against graft and corruption.

According to Alvarez, he has obtained the support of Lakas, the Liberal Party, the Nationalist People's Coalition, the Partido Sosyalista ng Pilipinas and other groups.

PDSP is chaired by presidential adviser for special concerns Norberto Gonzales.

"I am deeply concerned with the identity crisis that is currently gripping Lakas-CMD as a result of the entry of certain personalities in its senatorial slate," Alvarez said.

He was apparently referring to pro-Estrada allies Miriam Defensor-Santiago, John Osmeña and Rodolfo Biazon who bolted the opposition to join Ms Macapagal's ticket. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*



Graft court as confused as Erap on his plans

By Armand N. Nocum

IF OUSTED President Joseph Estrada is in a muddle as to where and when to have his knee operation, the justices of the Sandiganbayan are just as confused.

Court officials of the Sandiganbayan's special division, under Presiding Justice Minita Nazario, are considering summoning the former President so he could personally tell the court what his plans are.

"The court is confused," declared Renato Bocar, spokesperson of the anti-graft court's first special division, which was created to hear the plunder and graft charges filed against Estrada. In a telephone interview, Bocar said the court wants to clarify matters with Estrada before they rule on his lawyers' motion to allow the ousted President to leave the country on Jan. 23, as well as to reduce the number of his police escorts from four to two.

"The court wants to summon the former President to a hearing," he said, adding that if Estrada says he was no longer interested in going to the US, then his request becomes "moot and academic."

After his lawyers filed a motion to extend the preparation period for his trip to later this month, Estrada said he wanted to stay in the country until after the elections to help presidential candidate and his buddy, actor Fernando Poe Jr. He added that the $1.25 million demanded by his American doctor Christopher Mow, for his operation was too high and he was having problems securing an American visa.

Later, he said he could no longer bear the pain in his knees and was unable to walk. This time, he wanted to have his operation in France, Canada or Japan.

With this change in plans, Bocar said Estrada may have to file another travel request.

"What's the use of coming out with a ruling if the former President is not going to the US?" said Bocar.

This constant changing of plans makes it looks like Estrada is not really in pain, but simply wants to go abroad so the court would lose its jurisdiction over him, said Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio. Neither France or Japan has an extradition treaty with the country, he pointed out.

"He sounds more like a tourist who wants to see the sights rather than someone who requires immediate medical attention," said Villa-Ignacio in a telephone interview. He said his office will use Estrada's ever-changing plans as grounds to ask the court to "nullify" its controversial Dec. 23 ruling.

In a manifestation they will submit to the court today, Villa-Ignacio said they will also cite the views of former Sen. Jovito Salonga, who said that allowing Estrada to go abroad was not only legally questionable, but also impractical since there were many qualified, experienced and competent doctors here who could do the operation.

'Dear Fernando, please RSVP'

LIKE THE actor that he is, Fernando Poe Jr. is keeping the mainstream Left in suspense by not confirming so far whether he would attend today's national convention of the party-list group Bayan Muna.

Poe's fellow presidential candidates, former Education Secretary Raul Roco and evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, have confirmed their attendance at the conference. But Poe has yet to send word whether he will be coming to the meeting.

"Bayan Muna is still awaiting today the commitment from the camp of Poe," said Bayan Muna president and Rep. Satur Ocampo in a statement yesterday.

Among those who have confirmed their attendance are vice presidential candidate Sen. Loren Legarda, administration senatorial bets Manuel "Mar" Roxas and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, and opposition senatorial candidates House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla, Francisco Chavez and Jamby Madrigal, Ocampo said.

Not invited to the forum were President Macapagal-Arroyo, her running mate, Sen. Noli de Castro and Sen. Panfilo Lacson. *Carlito Pablo*

Meet all the President's men, and women, behind campaign

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

VETERAN politicians, military strategists, presidential appointees and trusted men and women will be behind the first presidential campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., president of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and Ms Macapagal's long-time ally, will be "on top" of the campaign, while Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita will serve as chief executive officer, according to Palace sources. Marita "Mai" Jimenez, presidential adviser on overseas development assistance projects, has been designated media coordinator.

And when the President plunges full-time into the campaign, her "Little President," Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, will become the "Big President." Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said some governance matters would have to be decided at Romulo's level.

During the campaign period which starts Feb. 10 for national candidates, Jimenez said, the President would still set the hours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily for "public schedules," and the rest of the day for private and political activities.

Other Palace officials will also steer clear of the campaign to stay on the governance side, including Bunye, chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao and Press Secretary Milton Alingod. Tiglao, however, helped in formulating the campaign platform.

De Venecia said Ms Macapagal, who was his running mate in the 1998 presidential elections, asked him to be general campaign manager. But he said he suggested that presidential legislative adviser Gabriel Claudio be allowed to continue doing the job instead.

"I don't want people asking me for money," said De Venecia, who is running for re-election in the fourth district of Pangasinan.

Former President Fidel Ramos, Lakas chair emeritus, and other party officials and lawmakers will be among the key political advisers.

The choice of Ermita as campaign CEO puzzled the members of the President's official family. The decorated Armed Forces general is associated with Ramos.

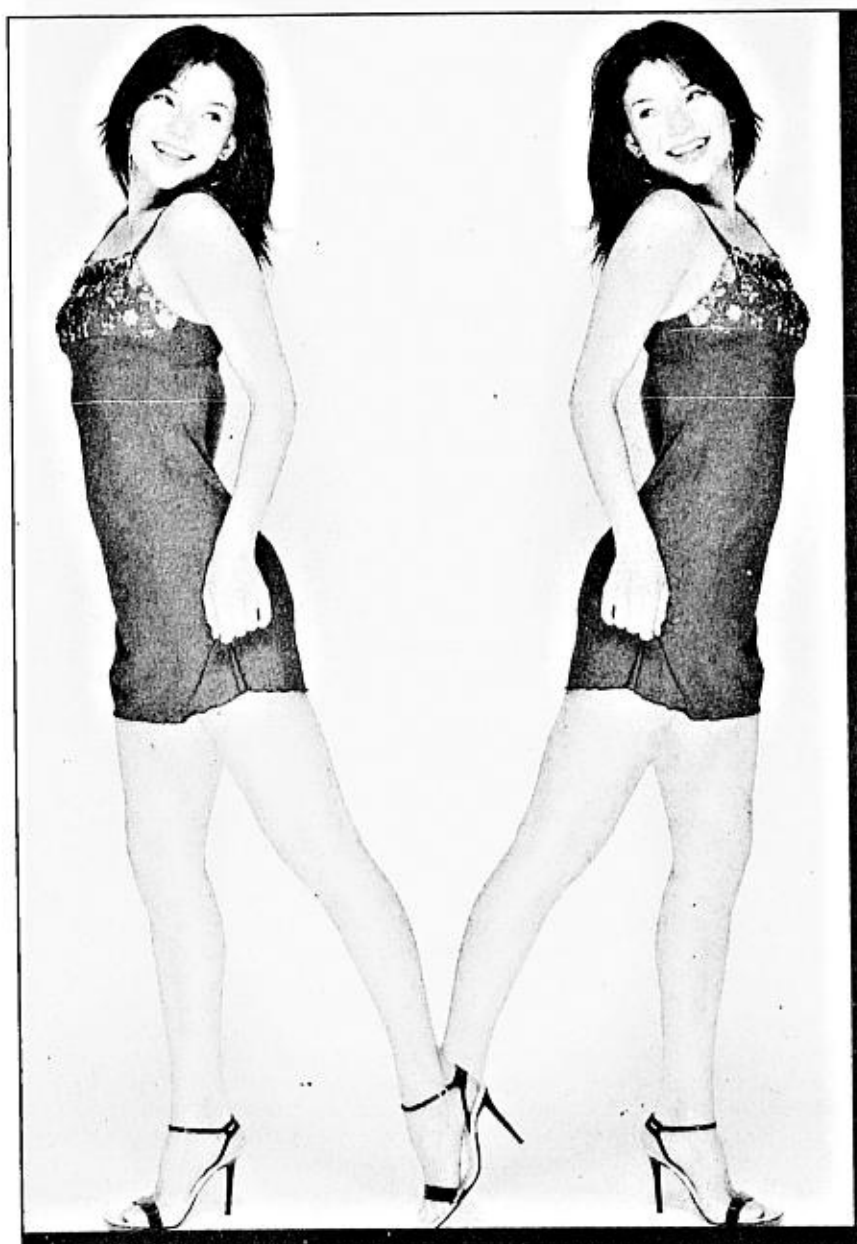
"Secretary Ermita is a peace-maker (and) a very good strategist," Jimenez said.

Claudio, also deputy secretary general of Lakas, appears to be calling the shots. He led the committee that picked the 12 senatorial candidates of the Koalisyon ng Katapatan at Karanasan sa Kinabukasan or K4.

Tomas Alcantara, another presidential adviser, is often seen at campaign-related meetings, but his exact role has not been defined. The same is true with Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay.

Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco, presidential adviser on media and religious affairs, will be in charge of the campaign of vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro and the senatorial candidates.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman will plan the President's out-of-town sorties.



Senators to tackle Cha-cha bid today

From page A1

stand. We'll play it by ear. We can't just ignore it (the resolution) because it's there."

He was quick to say, however, that senators were not comfortable with the renewed push for Charter change.

"It looks very tight," said Pangilinan, who admitted that senators had misgivings on the plea of Speaker Jose de Venecia to include the election of delegates to the Constitutional convention during the May 10 polls, so that the country could shift to a parliamentary system in three years.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, who earlier claimed that it would take a miracle to force the chamber to dance the Cha-cha, again expressed doubts as to whether the Senate could still pass the resolution.

"As I said, first it is sponsored on the floor by Senator Angara. We have no information at this point whether he will be ready to defend it. At least three members of the majority (asked) to avail (themselves) of the period of interpellations—Senators Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar and Robert Barbers."

Ready to defend

But Angara said he was prepared to defend the resolution. "The only thing that worries me now is why suddenly they're (the House members) so keenly interested in pushing for the Cha-cha when for almost three months they've been so quiet and not pushing it."

Saying there's more to it than meets the eye, he said he would begin the debate today "by asking why the sudden interest" in the resolution and "what is the end game in all this?"

"I heard them saying that the primary item on the agenda is the budget and there is very little time for any other item especially the Cha-cha. What will happen is that if they push for the Cha-cha or the Con-con at this time, that means that the elections of delegates would be held simultaneously with the national elections. We'll have probably the longest ballot in history."

If the proposal were passed by the Senate, the poll body would list about 2,000 new names in the ballot. "So we'll find out whether there's really time," said Angara.

Mere resolution

Drilon said Sen. John Osmeña, the newest addition to the ruling bloc along with Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, had raised the issue of whether a mere resolution passed by three-fourths of Congress was sufficient to effect Charter change.

Drilon said the senators would also debate on the other implications of the resolution such as the deadline for the election of the delegates, the capacity of the poll body to print the ballots bearing the names of the delegates, and the fact that the Lower House had passed a resolution constituting Congress into a constituent assembly, not calling for a Con-con.

He said these things should be settled. "Nevertheless, even if time is so short, we would give it a good shot in the Senate, and put this on debate."

Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III favored a full discussion of the Angara resolution, but admitted that the Senate leadership had the final say on the fate of Con-con.

"It depends on the leadership of the Senate. The members of the minority gave the report. I'm sure the committee will be very willing to tackle it on the floor," said Sotto at a press conference in the Senate.

Unanimous approval

The House of Representatives decided unanimously in a caucus yesterday to rush the approval of a bill that will provide for the election of delegates to a constitutional convention simultaneously with the May 10 national and local polls.

De Venecia made the announcement despite earlier pronouncements by senators that time has run out on Charter change.

"The Con-con, as proposed by the House, would be held later this year and could work out amendments to the political and economic provisions of the charter from 90 to 180 days," he said.

This included the shift to a unicameral and federal system of government to "speed up economic development and eliminate the gridlock between the Senate and the House, and between the executive and the legislative," De Venecia said.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon) said that majority coalition would vote on the Con-con measure in the next few days.

"We will refer it to the Senate and we will challenge the senators," Zubiri said.

De Venecia earlier said the President had agreed to cut short her term if reelected on May 10.

Ms Macapagal was willing to serve only until May 2007 to pave the way for the shift to parliamentary and federal system, he said.

Poe, too

Rep. Harry Angping (NPC, Manila) said movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. was also willing to serve as a "transition President" in support of the federal and parliamentary shift.

Angping said: "Charter change is part of FPJ's (Poe) platform and he wants to exercise leadership by example."

By agreeing to an abbreviated term, Poe will be serving as an example to senators who have consistently resisted Charter change, he said.

"If FPJ can make the sacrifice to be a transition President, then the senators should also do the same," Angping said.

But opposition Rep. Abraham Mitra (LDP, Palawan) pointed out that the Con-con initiative would be publicly acceptable only if Congress banned members of political parties from joining the body.

VICE presidential hopefuls Senators Loren Legarda and Noli de Castro share a light moment before the start of the Senate session yesterday. JESS YUSON

FPJ a Filipino citizen, campaigners affirm

From page A1

Sotto III, said KNP lawyers led by Sixto Brillantes would submit documents to the Commission on Elections on Thursday showing that the movie actor and his late father and grandfather were all Filipinos.

The documents include those establishing that Poe's father, the late Fernando Poe Sr., was not only a Filipino but also a World War II hero.

Sen. Edgardo Angara said the documents would show "practices or acts of citizenship" to prove that Poe, known as FPJ or Da King, "is a Filipino citizen."

Sotto said Poe exercised acts which could only be done by Filipinos—he voted in elections, he holds a Philippine passport and he owns real estate property.

The KNP was forced to come up with the documents after lawyer Victorino Fonacier filed a petition with the Comelec last week seeking to disqualify Poe.

Fonacier claimed that Poe's parents were foreigners, making the actor ineligible to run for president. Poe's mother, Bessie Kelley, was an American citizen.

Fonacier said Poe's father was a Spanish citizen.

War hero

At a news conference in the Senate, Sotto said Poe's father fought in World War II and saw action in Bataan as a member of the Philippine Army.

From a first lieutenant in December 1941, the elder Poe was promoted to 2nd lieutenant in April 1942, according to Sotto.

"He was a veteran and survivor of the Death March and died as a captain of the army," Sotto said.

In 1945, Poe's father was given a Gold Cross for "meritorious services rendered under furious and intense enemy bombing and strafing."

Sotto showed a document citing Poe Sr. as among the three soldiers who were awarded the Gold Cross. The document, dated Sept. 27, 1945, was signed by then Army chief Maj. Gen. Basilio Valdez.

Sotto also showed reporters an old identification card of Poe as a member of the 34th guerrilla division of the Usaffe (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) in Luzon.

"The documents will prove that Poe is a Filipino citizen. Even his grandfather (who came from Spain) was a Filipino. In the 1935 Constitution, all inhabitants of the Philippines became Filipinos after 1935 unless you renounced it," he said.

"FPJ is very nationalistic. He did not hope to become a US citizen even though his mother was an American," Sotto said. "Therefore, FPJ is a Filipino by birth and by choice."

In heart and spirit

In keeping with its policy of shying away from election mudslinging, Malacañang yesterday said Poe should be presumed to have all the qualifications of a presidential candidate upon submission of his certificate of candidacy.

"In an electoral contest, once a contender submits his or her certificate of candidacy, there is always the presumption that everything is in order and that all the qualifications are met," said the President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye at a briefing.

"In any election, particularly in the presidential race, all should be afforded fair and equal opportunities."

In a statement Sunday in which she offered to help her rival in proving his citizenship, Ms Macapagal said: "I believe that Fernando Poe Jr. is a Filipino. I have no reason to doubt his being a Filipino in heart and spirit."

Opposition senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda, who attended the KNP news conference, asked Ms Macapagal to instruct her lawyers to intervene in the Comelec disqualification case against Poe after she said she believed Poe was a Filipino.

"[Her lawyers should] file a manifestation about her belief that FPJ is a Filipino citizen and therefore join the defense panel asking for an outright dismissal of the petition to disqualify him," Maceda said.

He described the President's statement as a "master's stroke" because it somehow defused the suspicion that her camp was behind the disqualification case.

Fonacier is a lawyer identified with First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, according to Angara.

The Alliance of Generals for Poe and Loren (AG POE) and the Freedom Peace and Justice Movement (FPJM) said they would stage mass protests if Poe was disqualified from running.

"We are warning the administration that we will bring this case to the Filipino people," FPJM national chair Manny Portes said. "This will serve as its wake-up call." *With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Margaux Ortiz*

FIRE victims are temporarily sheltered at a Baseco warehouse. ERIK ARAZAS

Tondo fire leaves thousands ...

From page A1

arrived in the area at around 1:30 a.m. yesterday to check on the situation of the victims, barangay officials said.

Her spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said the President's main concern was the health of the residents, specifically the children.

Malacañang reported that government doctors were sent to the area to prevent an epidemic. Food, clothes and medicines were being distributed to residents at several evacuation centers, it said.

Bunye said the President ordered the the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council to join hands with the City of Manila in drawing up a long-term rehabilitation program for the Baseco compound.

The displaced residents were moved to seven centers—the Department of Public Works and Highways basketball court, the Baseco Elementary School, the Del Pan Sports complex, the Baseco warehouse, the Baseco basketball court, a reclaimed area also in Baseco, and the Iglesia ni Cristo chapel.

By 10:30 a.m., around 1,000 families had been brought to the DPWH basketball court.

Social welfare officer Benjie Barbosa said the families would be given bags of grocery items, such as coffee, canned goods, sugar and rice, but the children would need milk and all the evacuees badly need potable water. Portalets have been delivered to the DPWH-NCR.

Noodle soup

Meager belongings rescued from the fire were piled all around the basketball court. Some tried to sleep, while others looked for food. Lines formed quickly when noodle soup was brought out to feed the evacuees, most of whom had not eaten breakfast.

While the DSWD's food and relief supply was not enough, aid has been pouring in for the families displaced by the fire, Manila's social welfare chief Jose Baranda said.

"There are so many things that are needed, and thankfully many people have been helping out," Baranda said.

The Philippine Red Cross, the Philippine Ports Authority, Kababaihan ng Maynila, Missionaries of Charity, and other organizations have volunteered to assist the fire victims.

The DSWD will be providing meals for the victims until tomorrow, after which they will be given relief goods. "By that time they would have already settled, and can begin working again," Baranda said.

He said there were no plans to relocate the victims as they were expected to return to the site to rebuild their houses. *With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

Bone marrow transplant survivors, kin keep faith

From page A1

was performed in early December 2002. The doctors hoped that the girl would be home by Christmas. Unfortunately, the initial transplant failed.

A firm believer in the power of prayer, Lopez regarded this only as a test of his faith. To this day, the Figueroas describe him as someone who took care of their family emotionally and spiritually as well.

A second transplant was performed on Dec. 31, again with Justin as donor. This time around, it was a success. Nicole was home by the second week of January 2003 and back in school by June.

Today, Nicole is a third grade pupil at the Marymount School in BF Homes, where she is at the top of her class. Seeing a healthy and active girl play and skip around the AHMC roof deck during the gathering of BMT survivors, it was hard to believe that this was the bald and despondent Nicole who had a transplant just over a year ago.

As Teresa Exmundo, one of Lopez's former patients at the City of Hope stressed that day: "By prayer, anything is possible. Even when you are at your lowest, you should go on fighting."

Indeed, with the skilled hands of genuinely caring doctors, the rate of survival for leukemia patients could only improve.

Dr. Jorge Garcia, one of the AHMC's founders, is very supportive of The Center for Bone Marrow Transplantation, established at the hospital in 2002. The center has since performed six procedures.

The next candidate is Patricia Francisco, an 8-year-old girl suffering from Thalassemia, a rare red blood cell disorder that requires monthly transfusions. Her story appeared in the INQUIRER last month.

"My heart goes out to her," Garcia said.

As a result of the transfusions, Francisco's bone marrow has become overloaded with iron, damaging some vital organs. Garcia said he wished the center could help more needy patients, but that the extremely high cost of the procedure would not allow it.

Depending on the gravity of the case, BMT at the AHMC could cost from P1 million to P3 million, where other major hospitals might charge up to P5 million.

The AHMC team consists of Lopez, Racho, Dr. Theresa Castillo of Pathology, and Dr. Salvador Abad Santos, plus a group of doctors and nurses from the Blood Bank.

Bone marrow is the soft, sponge-like material found inside the bones. It contains stem cells that produce blood cells, of which there are three types: white, which fight infection; red, which carry oxygen to, and remove waste products from, the organs and tissues; and platelets, which enable the blood to clot.

BMT, a non-surgical procedure, restores stem cells that have been destroyed by high doses of chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy.

There are three types of transplants: autologous, in which a patient receives his own stem cells; syngeneic, in which the donor is the patient's identical twin; and allogenic, in which the donor is someone other than the patient himself or his identical twin. This could be a "matched sibling"—the patient's brother, sister, or parent.

The majority of the procedures performed at the AHMC were of the allogenic type.

Lopez explains that the main purpose of BMT in cancer treatment is to enable patients to receive very high doses of chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. These therapies generally apply to cells that divide rapidly, like bone marrow cells.

Without healthy bone marrow, the patient is unable to make the blood cells needed to dispense oxygen, guard against infection, and prevent bleeding. However, high-dose treatments can severely impair these cells.

The survivors at the reunion had been in remission anywhere from six months to two and a half years. Once upon a time, these patients were literally on the brink of death.

Melanie Gonzales, a former patient, recalled being told by Lopez two years ago: "You'd better start praying." Now, like Nicole and all the other survivors, she is grateful for a second lease on life.

As for Lopez, who came home reluctantly in 2002, being able to help fellow Filipinos through the BMT center is a dream come true. Looking around during the gathering, he said: "I guess this is really where I should be."

For more information, contact the Center for Bone Marrow Transplantation, AHMC, tel. no. 771-9213.

RP hits US action vs Pinoy telecom execs

THE PHILIPPINE government yesterday expressed "concern and dismay" over the decision of the US Department of Justice to serve summons on 30 Filipino telecommunications executives attending a conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, over the weekend for alleged violations of US anti-trust laws.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert yesterday summoned US Ambassador to Manila Francis Ricciardone to convey the Philippine government's serious concern and dismay over the US action.

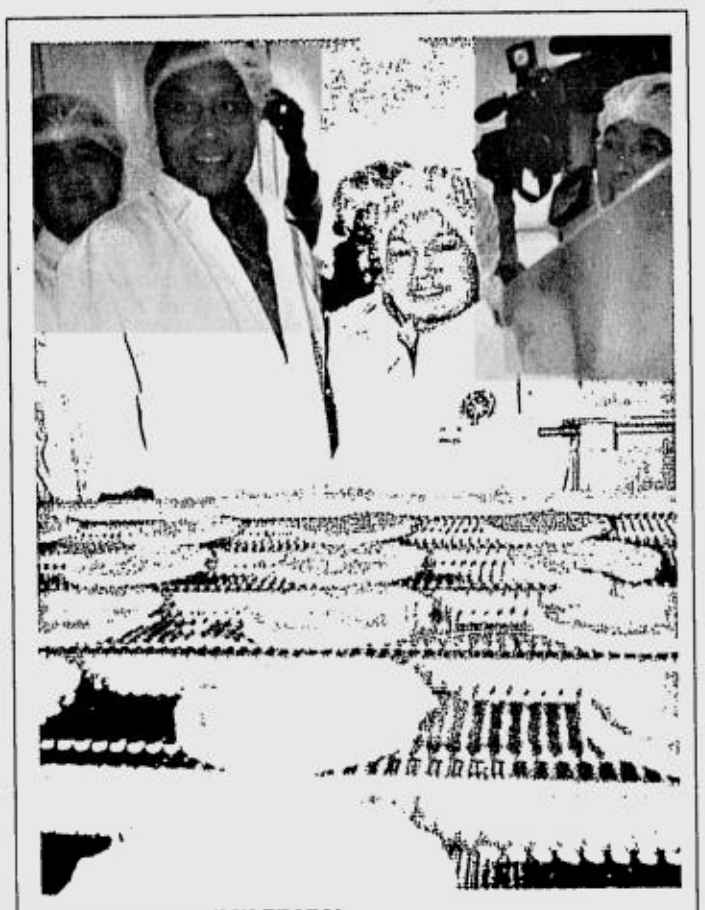
The US DOJ, with the help of Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, served summons on 30 Filipino telecoms executives who were attending the Pacific Telecom Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, to testify before a federal grand jury this week.

Albert said the timing of the issuance of the subpoenas while the Filipino executives were attending an international conference was "alarming" and meant to embarrass the telecom executives while abroad and perhaps even the Philippine government.

The subpoenas were served on representatives of local carriers Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., Digital Telecommunications Phil. Inc. and Bayan Telecommunications Inc.

These telecoms firms have all been involved in a dispute with major US carriers AT&T Corp. and MCI International over termination rates.

Termination rates are charges that an originating carrier pays for the completion of its subscribers' calls on a foreign carrier's network. *Jerome Aning and Abigail L. Ho*



WHERE ARE THE FRIES?
"In the name of the 25 million who eat Jollibee hamburgers—and I can speak for them because I have patronized Jollibee for the past 25 years—congratulations on your very good investment," said President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday as she inaugurated the new P1.5-billion commissary of local fast-food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. in Canlubang, Laguna. The facility can service the requirements of 800 stores, of which Jollibee has 450 at present. PCPO MALACAÑANG PHOTO

No statesman, he

DUE TO a proofreading error, the word "statesman" should have read "strongman" to describe former President Ferdinand Marcos in yesterday's story on Page A5, "Marcos heirs continue to buck high court ruling." *-Ed.*

Angara wing goes to court to block Ping's candidacy

By Philip C. Tubeza and Carlito Pablo

THE LABAN ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) faction led by Sen. Edgardo Angara yesterday asked the Supreme Court to order the Commission on Elections not to recognize the presidential bid of Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

The Angara wing, which supports the candidacy of actor Fernando Poe Jr., urged the high court to reverse the Comelec's Jan. 6 resolution recognizing the legitimacy of the other LDP faction headed by Sen. Agapito "Butz" Aquino which is backing Lacson.

"The assailed resolution, relying on what it claimed as 'legal equity,' allowed a single member of the LDP—Agapito Aquino—with absolutely no authority therefore and in contravention of the Constitution of the LDP, to nominate and sign/endorse the certificates of nomination and candidacy of the LDP candidates ... simultaneously with (Angara) who, under (the party) Constitution, is the only one properly authorized to (do so)," said the 34-page petition for certiorari signed by LDP general counsel Demaree Raval.

The Angara faction asked the SC to order the Comelec to recognize "only those LDP certificates of candidacy" for president, vice president, senator and other elective posts that Angara authorized.

It also asked the court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the Comelec from enforcing its Jan. 6 resolution, to restrain Aquino from functioning as LDP secretary general since Angara had already put him on "indefinite forced leave," and to prevent him from nominating candidates and presenting them as the official LDP bets.

Raval said the Comelec erred since the only issue posed before it was to decide who between the LDP chair and the secretary general was authorized to sign the certificates of nomination of official LDP candidates.

"The Comelec did not resolve this issue. Instead, the Comelec recognized both officers as authorized signatories of the LDP. Not only is this conclusion utterly without any legal and factual basis, it is patently contrary to the letter and spirit of the law," Raval said.

At the same time, the questions about the citizenship of Poe have brought new wrinkles to the fractured LDP.

Less than a week after declaring a ceasefire with the Angara faction, the Aquino wing has called off unity talks.

"We are suspending talks for unification," Aquino said in an interview over dzBB radio. "The Angara faction should first settle questions on the citizenship of their bet."

Aquino was referring to the petition filed by a lawyer questioning Poe's citizenship before the Comelec.

The petition alleged that Poe's father and mother were Spanish and American citizens, respectively, thus Poe could not have been born a Filipino.

Aquino said there was not much to talk about with the Angara group if Poe would be disqualified by the Comelec anyway.

He said, however, that local LDP leaders belonging to both camps were actively talking to settle the issue of who to support among party candidates for local posts.

"We're fixing the body (of the LDP), so to speak," Aquino said.

Last Thursday, Aquino met with Angara's representatives in a Makati hotel purportedly to renew unification efforts.

Lacson yesterday accused Angara of "sabotaging" the unification talks with the request to the Supreme Court to nullify the Comelec ruling recognizing the legitimacy of the two factions in the party.

"It now appears that Senator Angara has been negotiating in bad faith with Congressman Aquino and this is a clear act of sabotage on the part of the LDP president," Lacson said in a statement. *With Christine O. Avendaño*

GMA not fit to lead Edsa rites—Bayan

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has lost the moral ascendancy to lead any rites commemorating the third anniversary of Edsa II, a militant group said yesterday.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan)—one of the groups that participated in the peaceful uprising on Jan. 16-20, 2001 that ousted then President Joseph Estrada and installed Vice President Macapagal in his place—also called on the electorate not to vote for the latter in the coming presidential elections.

"Ms Macapagal has turned her back on her promise of a new politics based on platforms and parties. The administration slate shows she has become the foremost proponent of the much-hated politics of popularity and opportunism," said Bayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño.

Casiño was referring to the inclusion of Senators John Osmeña and Robert Jaworski and former Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago in the administration's senatorial slate.

Joey Marquez undergoes lifestyle check

By Armand N. Nocum

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman has expanded its lifestyle check program to include elective officials in Metro Manila, with Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez being the first official investigated for alleged graft and dishonesty in public office.

Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos said that aside from Marquez, an incumbent governor "somewhere in Luzon" was also being investigated for enriching himself while in power.

"There are 10 other high-level officials under investigation in our lifestyle check program. They include local government officials mostly in Metro Manila," said Nocos, who also serves as Ombudsman's spokesperson.

Apart from elected officials, Nocos said they were also investigating at least one regional director and three to four district engineers of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

He did not name the officials pending the completion of their investigation.

Marquez and eight others were indicted before the Sandiganbayan last week for allegedly overpricing in the local government's purchase of 128,842 pieces of whisk brooms bought between January 1996 to September 1997. They were accused of raising the cost of the "*walis tingting*" from P4 to P14 each. The Commission on Audit had earlier ruled that the purchase was "grossly overpriced." It also noted that the purchase was done without compliance to auditing rules.

Deputy Special Prosecutor Robert Kallos has recommended P450,000 bail each for Marquez, five of his staffers and three businessmen, who have been charged with 15 counts of graft.

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Selective automation now a law, claims proponent

By Carlito Pablo

HAS THE joint resolution calling for selective automation of the May 10 elections already lapsed into law?

Its principal author yesterday said yes, after President Macapagal-Arroyo "failed" to act on it.

"The joint resolution calling for selective automation had lapsed into law as if the President has signed it," said Rep. Jesli Lapus (NPC, Tarlac), chair of the House committee on electoral reforms.

Lapus noted that the President failed to either approve the measure through her signature or exercise her veto power.

But Malacañang yesterday suggested that the President herself doubted whether the joint resolution, unlike a bill passed by both houses, would be enough to amend the law providing for computerized elections.

"You know that will be subject to various legal interpretations, it's a bit complicated at this time," Ms Macapagal's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, said. "What we would like to emphasize is that the President is not taking any action of either vetoing or approving the joint resolution.

"Is it equivalent to a bill which is being sent to the President for signature? As to whether action or inaction would have the same result (as a bill) is something that is still being debated," Bunye said.

But Lapus had no doubts. He said Congress transmitted the joint resolution on Dec. 11 last year and under the Constitution, a bill or resolution lapses into law if the President fails to act on it after a period of 30 days.

No choice

"The resolution has become law effective Jan. 11 or a day after the 30-day period lapsed last Jan. 10," he said.

Lapus stressed that the Commission on Elections had no choice but to implement selective instead of nationwide automation.

"The joint resolution has complied with all legislative processes—first, second and third reading, and going through the bicameral conference committee process," he said.

Still unclear

But Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said the fate of selective or full automation was still unclear.

"Nothing. There has been no communication from Malacañang," Abalos said in Filipino. "It's just that the resolution has been left unacted upon."

Bunye emphasized that the President preferred to wait for the Supreme Court decision on the validity of the automation contract.

"There are prevailing circumstances which have to be considered, and (these include) the pendency of the matter in the SC and the possible decision of the Supreme Court in a short time," Bunye said.

"We will not delve into reckoning dates because the bottom line is the President will neither veto nor (approve), she will not act on (the) joint resolution," Bunye said in a briefing.

With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Martin P. Marfil

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Abalos: No stopping polls

From page A1

"As it is, the Comelec still has until Jan.15, 2004 to order the special ballots for the automated counting machines (ACMs). Comelec has stated that they need extra time to prepare special ballots for the ACMs. That is why the Comelec has set the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy as early as Jan. 5," the petitioners said.

"If the Comelec has sufficient time from Jan. 15 to election day to prepare the special ballots for the ACMs, then it would have much more sufficient time to prepare the needed ballots if they would have to be counted manually," they added.

THE CONTROVERSIAL automated counting machine. ERIK ARAZAS

2 months

The petitioners criticized Comelec spokesperson Ferdinand Rafanan for telling the media that an adverse court ruling would push back elections "by two months."

"The warning of the Comelec spokesperson is irresponsible. He is threatening the honorable court by saying that elections would not push through as scheduled should the latter come out with an unfavorable decision against the Comelec," the petitioners said.

"It is the responsibility of the Comelec to hold the elections on a given date, as mandated by the Constitution. It is neither right nor excusable for the Comelec to blame the honorable court for its inability to do its constitutional duty to hold elections, should an unfavorable decision be rendered against it in this case."

The petitioners asked the tribunal to immediately rule on the case to avoid further speculation on how the court would rule.

"Because the outcome of the case would have a major bearing on the process of the 2004 elections, speculations on how the honorable court would decide abound, and any irresponsible statement, such as that made by the Comelec spokesperson, only adds fuel to the fire. It is for this reason that the petitioners request of the honorable court to immediately issue a ruling on the matter."

Last week, the court's spokesperson said the ruling might be released today.

The ITFP and the other petitioners had asked the high court to stop the Comelec from implementing any contract with Mega Pacific Consortium/MP eSolutions for the supply of more than 2,000 ACMs intended for the Comprehensive Automated Election System.

Wide resistance

Opposition to any postponement of the elections continued to gather strength yesterday, with President Macapagal-Arroyo leading the charge.

"I disagree with any plan to defer or postpone the elections," the President said in a statement.

She said the holding of elections as scheduled for the second Monday of May was "important to our political and economic stability because we need the people's mandate to act on fundamental issues facing our nation," said Ms Macapagal, who is seeking her first presidential mandate in the four-cornered presidential race.

"For as long as the law says so, we will make sure the elections will push through as scheduled," she said.

"The Comelec has affirmed its preparedness for any scenario and we are ready to implement the directives of the electoral body," she said.

Congress reaction

Warning of a constitutional crisis, the House of Representatives rejected in a caucus yesterday any move to postpone the May 10 national elections.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said the majority coalition was appealing to the Supreme Court and the Comelec to "resolve within the next few days" the pending issue of whether the polls will have to be reset.

"We have unanimously agreed that the elections should not be postponed to avoid any constitutional crisis," De Venecia said.

He convened the caucus hours before Congress resumed its session following the Christmas break.

The Speaker warned that a "constitutional crisis would ensue if no winning President is proclaimed and sworn into office by June 30 this year."

Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said over the weekend that only local elections could be postponed, warning that the move to defer the national polls is constitutionally infirm.

In the Senate, more senators added their voice to the anti-postponement drive.

Opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara said his group would block any move to delay or postpone the May 10 polls, as he underscored the possibility of a "dangerous political vacuum" that would ensue if new leaders could not take their oath of office by June 30.

Senators Loren Legarda, Vicente Sotto III and Manuel Villar Jr. also voiced their opposition to any delay.

Angara said the opposition would make sure it would block any bill seeking to reset the election.

"We will not allow the postponement and I don't think the House will allow it," he told reporters in the Senate.

"That would be a great temptation to adventurers of the Right and the Left to move in and fill the vacuum and that's dangerous," Angara said.

Unfair action

Legarda, who is the running mate of opposition standard bearer Fernando Poe Jr, told reporters that any postponement would be unfair not only to those running in May but the people as well.

"We need not postpone the election because the people now need change in the country," Legarda said in Filipino.

Sotto told reporters there was no need to postpone the May 10 polls because the Commission on Elections could always go back to the manual counting of votes.

"That (postponement) is one thing that the Filipino people will not accept," Sotto warned.

Villar said the government should not entertain any postponement proposal. He said it would be risky to push through with the planned automated elections because, for one thing, the outcome of the election might be questioned by some sectors.

For him, it would be safer to hold a manual counting of votes.

"We need to hold the elections as scheduled to bring about political stability," Villar said in a statement.

May 20

The chair of the House committee on electoral reforms filed yesterday afternoon House Bill No. 6647 seeking to reset the May 10 elections for May 20.

Rep. Jesli Lapus (NPC, Tarlac) said his proposed measure was "insurance" against the expected disruptive effects of a possibly adverse SC ruling.

"This will provide the Comelec 10 days to prepare to revert back to manual operations," Lapus said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Juliet Javellana*

Politicians worry Baguio festival executives

From page A1

The city government unwittingly adopted Roco's colors when it launched the 2004 Panagbenga Flower Festival on Monday here.

Officials and government-sponsored performers attended the program wearing garish light shirts that alternately bore bright orange, bright yellow and a jungle-tone shade of flowers.

When the INQUIRER mentioned the colors' unintended effect, Councilor Edilberto Tenefrancia, the festival's program coordinator, said Roco actually "borrowed" the Panagbenga colors for his campaign.

But local officials are reviewing the festival attributes in anticipation of the politicians, who may troop to the city next month "to use the festival as their campaign vehicle," said Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer.

Organizers of the nine-year-old festival are also working out new guidelines to regulate the politicians' role in the street parades.

They noted that the main part of the festivities falls on the first week of the campaign period for national elective posts. The street parades are scheduled for Feb. 21-22.

Political circus?

Tenefrancia said the proposed festival rules for politicians would also reduce the chances of a presidential candidate upstaging a rival during the parade.

"[The Baguio flower festival] is already on the map [of national tourist draws] ... [But] we don't want to turn it into a political circus," he said.

Ms Macapagal has been invited to grace the parade, and already has the edge in terms of billing. As head of state, she will lead the parade.

But rivals like Poe, Roco, Sen. Panfilo Lacson or even preacher Eddie Villanueva will be asked instead to join politicians, who will be trailing the President.

Mayor Bernardo Vergara did not comment when asked who among the feuding Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino standard-bearers would get first billing, or whether Ms Macapagal would be asked to join the rest of the presidential and senatorial candidates in the name of fair play.

Most of the city's top officials are reelectionists running under the administration K-4 coalition.

Tenefrancia said the rules they are drawing up would be applied evenly on all political candidates.

First-come, first served

Alhambra, however, admitted that the festival organizers would be accommodating candidates on a "first-come-first served" basis.

He said the city already suffered the consequences of politics tainting the festival during the elections in 2001 when senatorial candidates "gatecrashed" the parade.

The 2001 parade drew the biggest traffic jam in the city's history because it was held simultaneously with the annual alumni homecoming of the Philippine Military Academy.

Alhambra said the rules were aimed at discouraging politicians from shaking the hands of people.

Artist Tony Romawac, a member of the festival organizing committee, suggested allowing politicians to perform with gong players during the parade.

Romawac had organized about 100 children and teenagers to play 800 indigenous gongs during the parade.

"It's a good idea because each politician will be asked to participate by playing a gong. That way, no one will have a chance to reach out and shake hands with the crowd," Alhambra said.

PARTICIPANTS in last year's Baguio City Flower Festival. EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Shabu research ...

From page A1

porters. "This means that the group's operation is very much in place."

The suite was leased by one Mico Tan, who had been arrested in connection with the shabu laboratory raided by the Civil Security Group in Carmona, Cavite, in November last year.

Found in the Parañaque facility were chemicals, illegal drug paraphernalia, charts showing steps in the manufacture of shabu and an undetermined volume of the banned substance.

From Parañaque, Aglipay and a convoy of local policemen and members of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency went to Las Piñas and stormed a shabu laboratory at 38 New Delhi St., BF Tourist International, and a warehouse on Aguilar Avenue in Talon.

Front firm

Both facilities were operated by Francis Chan, Michael Chan and William Ang, who hid their illegal business under a firm distributing noodles, fruit preserves and juices, and mixed sauce. They all remain at large.

Aglipay said the gang was the biggest transnational drug ring based in the country after William Gan's group. Gan, the biggest drug lord in the country, was arrested in Binondo, Manila, on Dec. 26.

The Talon warehouse yielded at least 678 sacks of ephedrine (a key ingredient in the manufacture of shabu), 27 bags of the illegal substance in different stages of production, and an electric spin dyer with a 7-kilo capacity.

The drug haul alone was estimated at P33.9 billion.

The huge volume of shabu and ingredients found in the two-story warehouse indicated that Ang's syndicate was still active, said Supt. Nelson Yabut, team leader of the Aglipay task force. The gang leaders "would not easily give away almost 16.9 metric tons of their precious chemicals just like that," he said.

Contacts

Documents found in a box showed a list of the gang's alleged contacts in the illegal drug trade.

In the laboratory at BF International, authorities found chemicals, Buchner funnel, motor pump, turbo dryer, weighing scale, demodifier, gas tanks, gas stoves, metal cylinder and other pieces of equipment used in the manufacture of shabu.

Aglipay said the triple raid set the tone for the government's efforts against illegal drugs this year.

"We are starting the year with guns [blazing] to prove that we are not resting on our laurels," he said.

The seven-month-old campaign has so far seized P13 billion worth of illegal drugs ready for sale and dismantled 16 shabu laboratories in Metro Manila and its neighboring provinces.

With the raids in Parañaque and Las Piñas, President Macapagal-Arroyo crowed that her anti-drug campaign was gathering more steam.

In a statement, the President said the three facilities belonged to an "integrated drug network," which has been under extended surveillance.

"We are drying up supply, clearing the barangays of pushers and taking in more users for rehabilitation," she said. *With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

Are the mice playing when the cat is away?

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CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

Private Sector

Thank you.

As we begin 2004, we would like to thank the loyal followers of the Consumer & Oil Price Watch nationwide for their unwavering support and involvement in our consumer advocacies.

For the first quarter, we will redirect our attention from political to more basic concerns - such as the shortage of chicken, the tight supply of cement, the increase in Meralco power rates and oil prices.

In this connection, we met with the various industry associations last December 23rd and January 6th.

PRICE OF CHICKEN WILL BE LESS THAN P100 STARTING FEBRUARY

During the January 8th National Price Coordinating Council meeting chaired by DTI Undersecretary Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., the industry assured us that chicken will be less than P100 per kilo starting February or earlier as supply normalizes.

Why the shortage: The overproduction in chicken in 2002, aggravated by imports and smuggled chicken coming in, resulted in huge financial losses for the industry.

As a result, in 2003, the industry became conservative and reduced chicken production. The reduction was compounded by the higher cost of raw material inputs - corn and soy meal.

Former Secretary MAR Roxas anticipated as early as October a very tight supply and recommended the importation of chicken, tax free, to take care of the shortage during the holiday season. But policy differences between DTI and DA prevented the importation of the additional supply of chicken.

The industry, also, underestimated the growing institutional demand from fast food chains like Jollibee, Mcdonald's, Max, and Lechon Manok.

We propose that for better coordination, the Undersecretary for Agriculture in charge of monitoring the prices of agricultural products should participate in the National Price Coordinating Council meeting chaired by the DTI secretary.

PRICE OF CEMENT TO END USER: P125 IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION (NCR)

The Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines assured us and the public that the new price of cement effective today will not exceed P125 per bag to end users in the National Capital Region, up to the end of June.

We commend MAR Roxas for his efforts in balancing the interest of the cement manufacturers and the consumers by lowering the safeguard duty by P5.00 (from P20.60 to P15.60). Otherwise, the price of cement would have been higher.

PROJECTED OIL PRICE INCREASE IS 80 CENTAVOS THIS MONTH

In our meeting with the oil companies, we agreed on the need to temper oil price increases. We hope that they will adhere to this 80-centavo increase, computed as follows:

1. **We owe the oil companies 33 centavos because of the December increase due December 19th but requested for postponement after the holiday season.**
2. **Crude cost increased by $0.98 compared to November, after including the increase in freight and premium over Dubai.**
3. **The two remaining oil refineries, Shell and Petron, import 30% finished gasoline and diesel from the region, to blend with the locally refined oil to comply with the Clean Air Act.**

   This contributed to the higher cost as MOPS gasoline increased by $3.83 per barrel while diesel increased by $1.51 in December compared to January.

Consumers are understandably angry. Rest assured we will redouble our effort in working closely with the industry associations in close coordination with the various government agencies.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2004

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Blair: Saddam's arms may never be found

BAGHDAD—British Prime Minister Tony Blair suggested Sunday that Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction may never be found in Iraq as unrest flared again in the British-run southern sector of the country.

US President George W. Bush's justification for the war on Iraq was also expected to come under the spotlight with revelations he was intent on ousting Saddam long before the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

"In a land mass twice the size of the UK it may well not be surprising you don't find where this stuff is hidden," Blair said. "You can't be definitive at the moment about what has happened."

Asked if he had been wrong in highlighting the weapons threat, cited as the main justification for the US-led war, Blair told BBC television: "You can't say that at this point in time.

"What you can say is that we received that intelligence about Saddam's programs and about his weapons, that we acted on that."

A poll showed that half of British voters believe Blair lied over the outing of David Kelly, a government weapons expert who killed himself last year after being exposed as the source of allegations that the prime minister's office "sexed up" intelligence on Iraq and weapons of mass destruction.

Blair, Bush's closest ally in the war and the subsequent occupation of Iraq, has indicated he would quit if it was proven that he lied over Kelly.

Bush, who has also faced pressure at home over suggestions he exaggerated the Saddam threat, was always determined to get rid of the Iraqi strongman who went up against his father, former president George Bush, in the 1991 Gulf War, according to claims by former US treasury secretary Paul O'Neill.

"From the very beginning, there was a conviction that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go," O'Neill, sacked by Bush in December 2002, told US television in an interview aired Sunday.

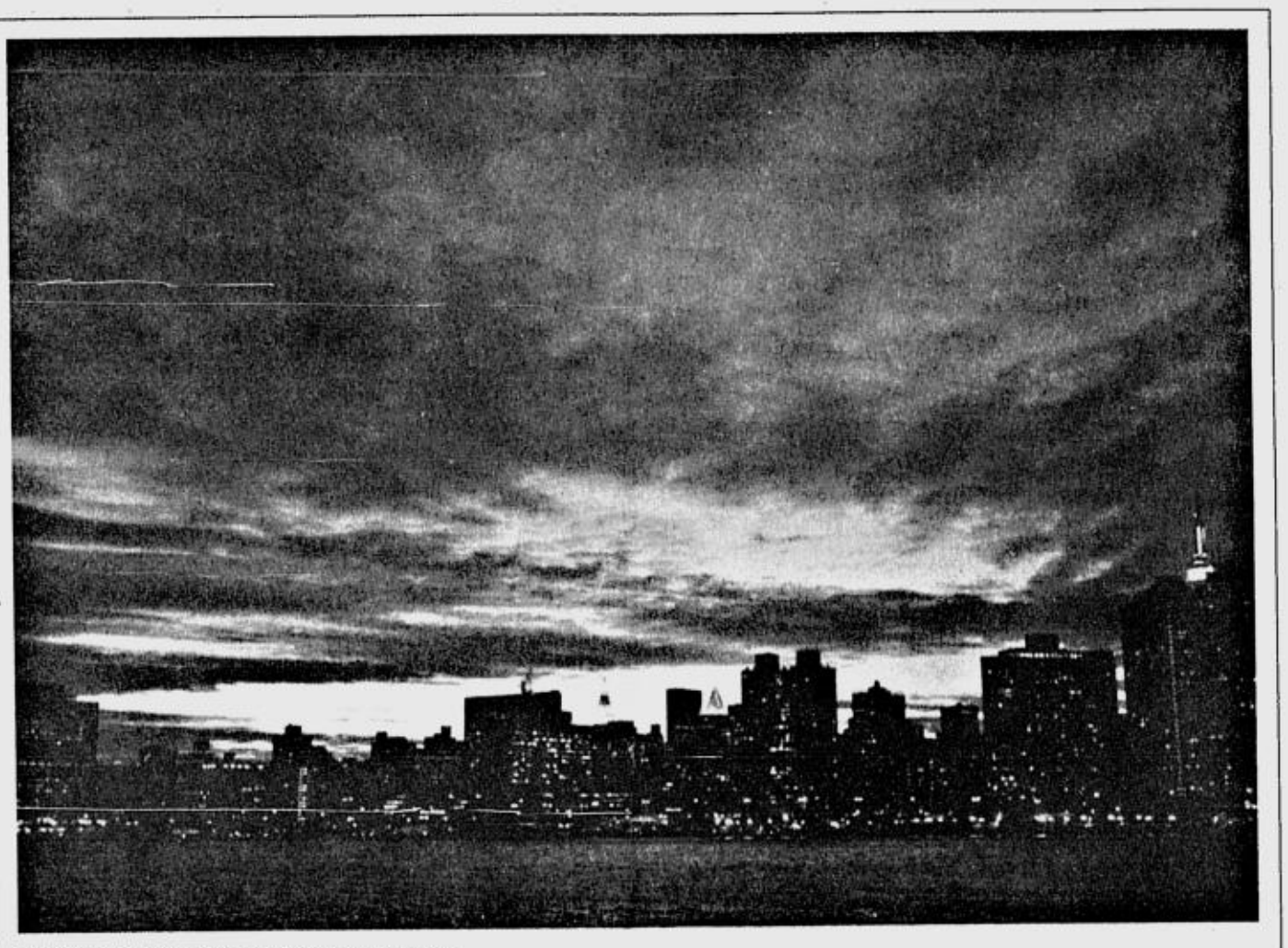
O'Neill also said he never saw any evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

In an interview with Time magazine, O'Neill said he saw only "allegations and assertions" about Iraq's weapons programs during his tenure, which included a seat on the National Security Council.

"In the 23 months I was there, I never saw anything that I would characterize as evidence of weapons of mass destruction," O'Neill said. "There were allegations and assertions by people.

"But I've been around a hell of a long time, and I know the difference between evidence and assertions and illusions or allusions and conclusions that one could draw from a set of assumptions," he said.

"To me there is a difference between real evidence and everything else. And I never saw anything in the intelligence that I would characterize as real evidence," he said. *AFP, AP*



WINTER WEATHER IN MANHATTAN
The skyline of Manhattan photographed across the Harlem River Jan. 11. The worst cold of the winter enveloped the New York region and a large amount of New England, shattering records and forcing many to stay indoors. REUTERS

US bishop urges lawyers to oppose gay marriages

BOSTON—The leader of Boston's Roman Catholic Archdiocese asked Catholic lawyers and judges to oppose gay marriage in order to help protect what he called the beleaguered institutions of marriage and family.

"The social cost of the breakdown of family life has already been enormous," Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley said Sunday at the annual Red Mass, which is dedicated to those in the legal system. Marriage and the family are "threatened as never before" in America, he added.

O'Malley, who has led the Boston Archdiocese since July 30, didn't specify what legal professionals should do to protect marriage and the family. But afterward, he said in a brief interview, "We hope that they will use their profession and their understanding of the law to defend marriage."

"They're in a better position than any of us to understand what needs to be done to correct a very complicated situation that the court has put us in," he said.

Gay marriage has become a hot political issue in Massachusetts since the Supreme Judicial Court, the state's highest court, ruled in November that denying marriage rights to gays and lesbians was unconstitutional.

Gay and lesbian rights activists and their supporters applauded the ruling as a civil rights milestone. Plaintiffs in the suit were ecstatic, celebrating with immediate proposals of marriage to each other.

The ruling has also had critics, including the Catholic Church. Some state lawmakers, who have until May to come up with legislation that complies with the court ruling, have been looking into whether the court would be satisfied by the passage of a "civil union" law like that passed in Vermont.

The activists who pushed for the landmark Supreme Judicial Court ruling said they remained baffled by claims that their desire to make their partnerships legally binding is threatening marriage and the family. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Political crisis in Iran

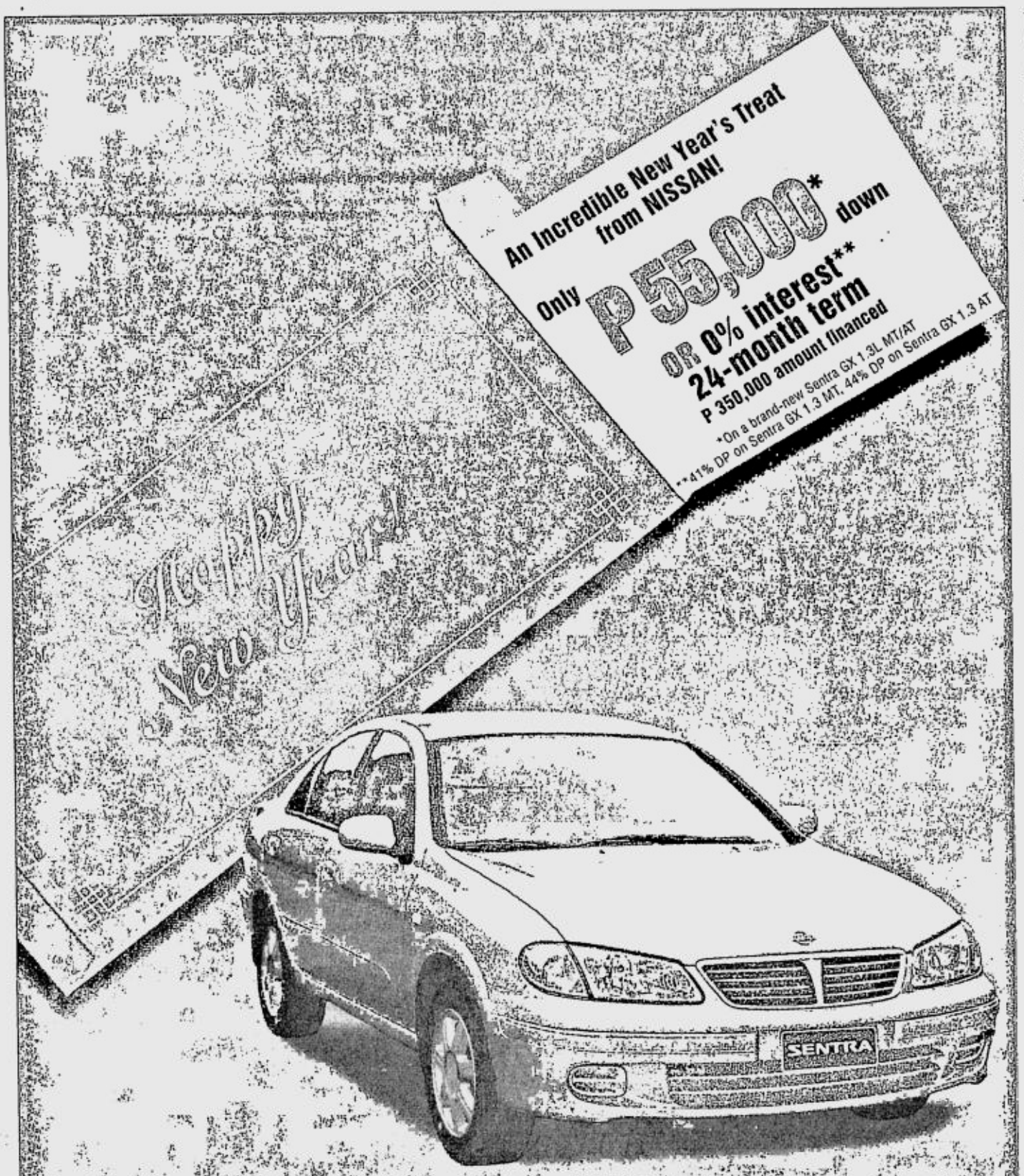
TEHRAN—Iran was plunged into a major political crisis Sunday after powerful conservatives moved to disqualify massive numbers of reformists from contesting next month's crucial parliamentary elections, a move one MP branded a "coup d'etat." There was uproar in parliament, held for the past four years by moderates loyal to President Mohammad Khatami, as it emerged the Guardians' Council had also barred leading pillars of the reform movement—including the brother of the president. "I consider this rejection of candidates to be an illegal coup d'etat and an act of regime change by non-military means," fumed Mohsen Mirdamadi, head of the parliament's foreign policy and national security commission. Mirdamadi was one more than 80 incumbent reformist MPs barred from standing in the Feb. 20 election by the 12-member Guardians' Council, an unelected political oversight body and bastion of the religious right. *AFP*

Israel seeks talks with Syria

JERUSALEM—Israeli President Moshe Katsav on Monday invited Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to visit Jerusalem for "serious negotiations" with Israeli leaders. Negotiations between the two countries, technically still at war, collapsed in 2000. But Assad has recently urged the United States to help revive the talks. "I invite the president of Syria to come to Jerusalem and meet with the heads of the state and hold serious negotiations," Katsav said on Israel Radio. Katsav's office is largely ceremonial, but it was the strongest sign from Israel of a willingness to talk since Assad said last month that he was keen to resume negotiations. *Reuters*

Top Colombian drug lord falls

PANAMA CITY—Panamanian police and US Drug Enforcement Administration agents have captured a man they believe is one of Colombia's most important cocaine lords, Arcangel de Jesus Henao Montoya, authorities said on Sunday. Henao Montoya, accused of being second-in-command of the Norte del Valle cocaine cartel and wanted by the United States, was captured on Saturday in the Torti region of the Darien Gap, a lawless swath of jungle on the Colombian border where he was apparently hiding out for months, Panama police chief Carlos Bares and Colombian police said. "He is still in Panama to be extradited, but we don't know where to," a Panama police official said. Colombian Attorney General Luis Camilo Osorio said Henao Montoya could be deported to Colombia or extradited to the United States. Colombian authorities use extradition to the United States as the ultimate punishment for drug lords, whose power and money have in the past bought them many privileges in Colombian jails. *Reuters*



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China confirms 3rd SARS case, appeals for calm

GUANGZHOU, China—Health authorities in southern China Monday confirmed a 35-year-old man as a third suspected SARS case, but said he had no clear links to animals believed to carry the illness and urged the public not to panic.

"Guangdong experts have confirmed it's a suspected case and have reported it to Beijing," said Wang Zhiqiong, deputy director of the health department in southern China's Guangdong province.

She suggested China's Ministry of Health would make a formal announcement soon.

"We reported this (to Beijing) Friday... Today we (Guangdong and Beijing experts) had a meeting. The Ministry of Health will formally announce it. Just wait for their announcement," Wang told reporters.

Xiao Zhenglun, deputy director of the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases in the provincial capital, also told reporters Monday local experts had concluded the man is a suspected case.

"In our health department, based on our expert group's opinion, we've confirmed it's a suspected case. But the Ministry of Health needs to do the same," he said.

The officials said they did not know the man's occupation, and there were no clues as to how he may have contracted the virus that causes the pneumonia-like and highly contagious Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

"At this point, there's no evidence that it's related to his work environment or contact with animals," Xiao said.

Thousands of rats and civet cats have been killed in Guangdong in a province-wide campaign to exterminate the animals, believed to be carriers of the disease.

The new patient was isolated in hospital and was in stable condition, Wang said.

Hong Kong health authorities said Sunday they had been informed of the case of the 35-year-old, but their counterparts in Beijing had said they knew of no new suspected cases.

The Ministry of Health has ordered all reports on the SARS outbreak must be announced by central health authorities, although the World Health Organization has urged them to expedite all reporting on the potentially deadly illness.

The latest case is the third to surface since China was declared SARS-free last July. One of the three—a man who has recovered—was confirmed as having SARS. A 20-year-old waitress remains under quarantine after she became the second suspected case of SARS last week.

The WHO meanwhile said it was looking into reports of a fourth suspected case.

Hong Kong newspaper Ming Pao said a 38-year-old man who worked at a meat and vegetable market in the boomtown of Shenzhen had been running a fever for days and the market had been closed for disinfection.

Health officials in Shenzhen denied it had any suspected or confirmed SARS cases.

WHO spokesperson Bob Dietz said: "We have no information on this report. We will be asking our team down there (in Guangdong) for further information."

Another Guangdong deputy health department director urged the public not to panic about the illness, saying the situation was far better than last year when an outbreak emerged in Guangdong and spread to more than 30 countries.

"Last year people, including doctors, did not know anything about SARS, which caused the disease to spread. This year, the prevention measures taken by medical workers are much better and we have added a lot of equipment," Feng Liuxiang said. *AFP*

A WOMAN with The Peking Acrobats performs a routine at the Kirkland Performance Center in Kirkland, Wash. on Jan. 11. AP

War crimes fugitive Karadzic evades net

PALE, Bosnia—Nato troops on Sunday scaled down a major weekend hunt for top Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic, triggered by a tip that injury may have forced him to seek help in his old headquarters town.

If Karadzic had indeed been there, he appeared to have once again slipped the net. By nightfall, only an ex-paramilitary policeman said to be "a supporter" had been detained, outside a nearby ski-resort hotel.

"They have been looking for my husband in the walls, in every inch of the house and, how absurd, in the septic tank," said the former leader's wife Ljiljana. "They seem to believe Radovan would hide like Saddam Hussein."

The "short-notice" manhunt began in a snowstorm on Saturday, as 200 troops and police fanned out in the town of Pale to search hospital and church buildings from top to bottom, looking under beds, in cupboards and even the church bell-tower.

Karadzic's onetime fief sits in the mountains above the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, whose bloody 1992-95 siege earned him his first United Nations indictment for genocide.

The Nato-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) said it was acting on reliable information that Karadzic had contacted his family and supporters, and might be injured.

The search, which included local Bosnian Serb police, was the "single biggest joint operation we have conducted in 18 months" SFOR Captain Mathew Brock told reporters.

"Mr. Karadzic has not been located," he said. But ammunition and documents found in his wife's house could be "very useful in determining his whereabouts," Brock said.

He said SFOR would maintain a presence in Pale overnight and probably end the operation by noon on Monday. *Reuters*

Chavez accuses US of plotting his assassination

CARACAS, Venezuela—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez accused the United States on Sunday of plotting his overthrow through a coup or assassination should his opponents fail to secure a referendum vote against him this year.

Speaking on the eve of a regional summit in Mexico, the left-wing leader, for the second day running, delivered a furious tirade against senior US officials who have criticized his five-year presidency.

Venezuela is a major supplier of oil to the United States.

The Venezuelan president said recent statements by US officials urging him to submit to a constitutional referendum were "preparing the ground" for his possible violent ouster, either through a military coup or an assassin's bullet.

He repeated his conviction that Venezuela's opposition had failed to gather enough pro-vote signatures to trigger a referendum in April or May. Electoral authorities are due to start checking the signatures next week to see if they fulfill the 2.4 million required.

"If in the end they don't have enough signatures, and the National Electoral Council declares this, then I can see them there in Washington saying I'm an enemy of democracy," Chavez said during his "Hello President" television and radio show.

"(They'll say) that Chavez sabotaged the referendum, and so we have to get rid of him, it's worth toppling him... that the armed forces should take up arms against me, or that someone should shoot me," he added.

The opposition says it collected over 3 million signatures and has accused the president of trying to block the poll.

Chavez, who has clashed with Washington in the past, accused critics like Bush's National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice of having publicly supported a 2002 coup that briefly overthrew him. Washington denies this.

The Venezuelan leader promised to make his voice heard at Monday's Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, which will be attended by US President George W. Bush and other regional leaders.

His weekend outbursts could herald a stormy meeting. The left-leaning governments of Argentina and Brazil also differ with Washington on foreign policy and free trade.

On Saturday, rebuffing condemnation from Rice of his friendship with Cuba's Communist President Fidel Castro, Chavez told the US government to stop "sticking its nose" in Venezuela's affairs. *Reuters*

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'Parties'

IF THERE has been a lot of party-switching these days, blame the candidates themselves who have been criticized for "lack of principles," "opportunism" and "overweening ambition." But blame also the political parties for not promoting party discipline. And blame the voters for not exacting a rigid sense of loyalty from the candidates to their parties. If candidates can't be loyal to their parties, can they be expected to be loyal to the people?

EDITORIAL

The trouble with the Philippines is that it does not have a real party system; it does not have political parties in the sense that they are known, say, in the United States and the United Kingdom. Here political parties are basically non-ideological organizations used to promote personal and factional political ambitions and goals.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, political parties were established to achieve long-term goals and there was clear differentiation among them. Here, after the end of the Marcos dictatorship, more often than not, parties are established only when a candidate is running for the presidency, or, in some cases, after a candidate has won the presidency.

Philippine political parties lack coherent political programs. The usual motherhood statements are passed off as political programs. They do not take innovative or bold positions on the major issues. They advocate conservative political positions and avoid taking any stance that could alienate big sectors of the electorate. Thus, for instance, the major political parties have not come up with a feasible answer to the nation's age-old problem of inequitable distribution of land, power and wealth.

Joel Rocamora of the Institute for Popular Democracy said that the most important characteristic of Philippine political parties is that they are parties of the elite. And because they are parties of the elite, they promote and advance the interests of the elite. Their candidates may mouth platitudes and say they are for the poor, but once they are elected they protect and promote the interests of the political and economic elite. Why do you think land reform measures have a hard time getting passed in Congress?

Political parties are not really interested in improving the condition of the poor. They want to keep the voters ignorant so that they will continue to elect the "popular" candidates foisted upon them. They want to keep the poor forever poor so that they will always have pliable, hungry voters whom they can easily bribe during elections.

In pre-martial law days, when there were just two major parties—Nacionalista and Liberal—the presidential and vice presidential candidates were nominated by conventions. With the emergence of the multi-party system under the 1987 Constitution, candidates are no longer chosen through conventions, but by "anointment" or designation by the party's leader or by its ruling group. In some cases the presidential candidate just proclaims himself or herself, and that's that. The selection process has become even less democratic.

Much has been said about "old politics" and "traditional politics." There have been attempts at political reform, but nothing has really changed since the 1930s. The politicians still merrily switch parties. Cheating, vote-buying and terrorism are still a constant feature of elections, perpetrated, in some cases, with the tolerance, if not the approval of political parties. After the elections, the spoils system comes into play. Financial political debts have to be paid, and to be able to do this, the newly elected officials have to resort to graft and corruption.

It's a never-ending cycle. Political dynasties are perpetuated so that the elite can continue to hold on to political and economic power. Politicians and candidates switch parties as easily as they change clothes. They move over to whichever party they think has the best chances of winning. They change their allegiance to the presidential candidate who they think can give them sufficient campaign funding or is most likely to win.

Can the system be ever changed? When will there be real differentiation in party programs? Is there hope that the political system can be reformed so that it will serve the interest of the great mass of the people instead of just the elite?

Why not tap Montalban Dam again?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ISN'T it paradoxical that while people literally drowned in floodwaters only a few weeks ago, the government is now warning of an impending water shortage? The water level in the Angat Dam is below normal, it said.

Yet they had to release water from the dam at the height of the rainy season because it was near to overflowing. What happened to all the excess water? And what is happening to the water flowing from the Umiray River for Metro Manila's water supply?

I think the explanation can be found in the letter to me, dated Jan. 8, 2004, of lawyer Jess Santos, chair of the National Association of Lawyers for Justice and Peace, and counsel of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo. The Angat watershed is being denuded by illegal loggers, wrote Santos, a lawyer from Bulacan who has been fighting the Angat loggers since the Marcos regime.

"As you will remember," he wrote, "there were three people who helped us in our campaign against illegal logging in the Angat Watershed Reservation, which is now the only source of water supply for Metro Manila: then NBI Director Alfredo Lim, the New People's Army," and *moi* when I was hosting the "Meet the Press" program of the National Press Club (that's according to Santos, not me).

"Through you, in fairness to President Marcos," he continued, "the illegal logging by his brother-in-law was stopped. NBI Director Lim, when informed that illegal logging was rampant in San Miguel, Bulacan, a part of the Angat watershed, sent teams of NBI agents again and again to stop the illegal logging.

"When Lim became mayor of Manila and illegal logging in Angat became rampant again, the NPA burned three ten-wheeler trucks loaded with freshly cut logs from the watershed. Illegal logging stopped again in Angat.

"When Cory Aquino became president, she appointed Ernesto Maceda as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Maceda issued a permit to the Arjecie Conglomerate Inc. to cut trees in 7,000 hectares of the Angat Watershed Reservation, inside the municipalities of Santa Maria, San Pablo and San Pedro, Bulacan.

"But a hero was appointed by President Aquino to the DENR, Sonny Dominguez, who cancelled the timber license five days after his appointment.

"During the administration of President Ramos, another DENR secretary wanted to cut all the apitong trees in the watershed because, according to him, the trees were 'sick.' *Santissima Trinidad, may sakit daw ang mga* apitong *sa* watershed *at dapat daw na putuling lahat*!

"Why did I write you? Secretary Elisea Gozun, I think, is a good secretary who can protect the Angat Watershed Reservation. But I wrote her once informing her of the 'carabao logging' in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija. I know that Gov. Tommy Joson is a patriot and a good man who would not tolerate this act of greed. But there is still illegal logging in the watershed up to now.

"The Angat Dam tragedy of Oct. 26, 1978 in Bulacan, the Ormoc and the very recent Leyte-Surigao landslides will soon be forgotten, but floods will again devastate my province of Bulacan, water shortages and power failures will come again if the Angat watershed is not protected from greedy loggers.

"I have been told Secretary Gozun is honest but forgetful. Please remind her that the only source of water supply for Metro Manila is the Angat Watershed Reservation and to please protect it."

* * *

There is another source of water for Metro Manila. In fact, it was the only source of water for Manila for many years until the Angat Dam and Umiray River were tapped and its water was deemed no longer needed. But now that these new sources are running short of water, it is time to tap this old source again. In comparison to the water supply from Angat and Umiray, the supply from this old source does not seem much, but it would tide us over the summer.

This old source is the Montalban or Boso-boso Dam. There used to be a steel pipeline from this dam to the La Mesa Reservoir nearby, but it was punched with so many holes by farmers to irrigate their fields along the way that the pipeline just rusted away. During the summer shortages a number of years ago, I campaigned in my column to tap it again by installing new pipes, but the manager of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System then didn't think it was necessary and didn't do anything. Now I understand the MWSS realizes it can help alleviate the water shortage, but why is it not doing anything to tap it? The distance from the Montalban Dam to La Mesa is very short and the cost of the pipeline won't be prohibitive. A private contractor had offered to do it using his own funds but for some strange reason, the MWSS then turned the offer down.

The Boso-boso reservoir can hold more water by raising the height of the dam. During the administration of President Carlos P. Garcia, there was a plan to construct a high arch dam here. The Boso-boso valley (the area now infested with squatters and land grabbers) was to be its reservoir. But when a similar arch dam in Malpasset, Italy, collapsed, the government got cold feet and abandoned the plan.

A similar arch dam doesn't have to be built there, but just rehabilitating the present dam will ease the water shortages that will hit the metropolis every summer from now on.

What party?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOON after I wrote that column on nuisance candidates some weeks ago, a movie director (a serious one who, therefore, is not seeking public office) called me up to say he was doing a script on them, that he hoped to turn into a movie before the May elections. I wish him all the luck in the world. It should be an interesting project. "Nuisance candidates" are the perfect commentary on the kind of elections we're having. The more you ask who the nuisance candidates are, the more you realize they are not necessarily the jobless painter or cultist or musician who promises to revive Woodstock.

My friend can add another entry to his research, and that is Bro. Eddie Villanueva. Villanueva, who refers to himself as the spiritual director of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide, though he is very much its corporeal head, is among those the Comelec is thinking of weeding out of the presidential race. A lawyer from the poll body says Villanueva does not belong to any political party. What he belongs to, or leads, is a religious flock. Not the same thing. "He claims," says the Comelec lawyer, "that he has millions of supporters, but the question is: Can he launch a nationwide campaign? Can he put up a machinery of poll watchers?"

Villanueva, of course, is protesting the idea. "I'm beginning to believe that those who are being hurt by my candidacy are behind this," he says.

I myself am not very fond of evangelists, whether they run for public office or not, not least on aesthetic grounds. There are only certain levels of stridence I can take, or warnings about fire and brimstone to visit me from my living a life away from their guidance. That is quite apart from the clothes they wear, which are neither Old Testament nor new wave—they are merely kitsch. No wonder the Abu Sayyaf think them natural prey for ransom because they reek of the riches of Babylon.

But Villanueva's case offers a glimpse into the black comedy that is the elections. It's curious, for one thing, why Villanueva should think his candidacy would take votes away from GMA, why GMA's lieutenants should apparently think so, and why the public would take it as the most natural thing in the world.

It is in fact true: Villanueva's presidential bid will take votes away from GMA. But why is this so? Quite simply, that is because GMA is relying on the votes of the JIL, quite apart from the El Shaddai, the Iglesia ni Cristo, and the other religious groups whose favor she has feverishly been courting over the past few months. She has appeared in many photographs with the leaders of those groups with a view to showing their flock she has their endorsement.

That alone mocks the argument that Villanueva may not run because he has no political party. Religious cults in this country are political forces, if not parties, and they are ruthlessly exploited by candidates, nuisance or not, for their own ends. I can still remember Erap being endorsed by El Shaddai through Mike Velarde's ritual of naming his "anointed" with the words, "*tiyak yon.*"

Today, among all the presidential candidates, it's GMA who has been going the rounds of the religious groups, not least the one headed by Jaime Cardinal Sin (he continues to do so notwithstanding that he has retired as archbishop of Manila) to try to counter the secular following of her more popular rivals. It's the "legitimate" candidates themselves—as opposed to "nuisance"—who have been turning the religious cults into political parties. Chief of them the President.

From the other end, what is a political party in this country? The real political parties in this country, in spirit if not in letter, in essence if not in law, are not Lakas, the PMP and the NPC and the other recognized political groups that are recruiting candidates today. They are, apart from the religious groups, the big movie outfits and the popular TV and radio stations. That at least is to go by the number of movie stars and TV personalities scrambling to become senators and other elective officials. The most successful political party in this country today is not the Lakas, it is ABS-CBN. Lakas and the PMP and the NPC are merely the last stage of the process: they are where prospective candidates go to be legitimized. Their political careers have been launched long before.

Indeed, what define Lakas, the PMP and the NPC as political parties? They do not stand for anything, they are merely the temporary refuge or harbor of people who are waiting to see how the political weather turns out. The ease with which Loren Legarda joined the so-called opposition and Miriam Santiago the so-called administration must show how rubbery the concept of "political party" is in this country. Quite incidentally, I saw a picture of GMA and Miriam kissing and making up in this paper last week and, remembering that one had vowed not to run again and the other had vowed to foreswear politics on her son's coffin, I was tempted to put a caption underneath that said, "What would you call them"?

There is one other reason why Villanueva stands to cut into GMA's vote. Which is that GMA has been posing as the one candidate who has a pipeline to God. Didn't she pass off her decision to run as God's will? The problem with being a poseur is that you lose when a better poseur comes along. GMA lost her edge in the show-biz department when FPJ came along, she lost her edge in the "I walk with God" department when Villanueva came along.

As to Villanueva facing disqualification for not being able to mount a machinery of poll watchers, do you need to show you have the means to prevent yourself from being cheated to run in this country? Isn't that what the Comelec is for?

Comelec has to get cracking

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

RELIABLE sources say the Supreme Court is poised to nullify the contract entered into by the Comelec with Mega Pacific for the purchase of counting machines for the May 2004 elections, with nine votes against, four in favor and one abstention. The Court was reportedly disturbed by the failure of some machines to perform efficiently during the demonstrations and the justices questioned their efficiency. The Court will reportedly recommend to the solicitor general and the ombudsman the prosecution of the commissioners who were responsible for the contract.

The voiding of the contract will bring us back to the manual counting of votes, even though the bill calling for selective automation lapsed into law the other day. This has, in turn, raised fears that the Comelec cannot handle the election results with credibility, leaving the nation with the alternative of postponing the elections. This eventuality is legally possible under the Constitution, as Senate President Franklin Drilon has pointed out, but this possibility has raised even more problems, such as the fear that postponement could lead to no elections or martial law.

* * *

More sober minds are now emphasizing that the elections have to be held by all means according to the schedule set by the Constitution, which is on the second Monday of May this year. They cited the possibility of instability that would ensue from a postponement. Various legislators have crossed party lines to raise the alarm, including Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, who said a postponement would be "explosive." I wholeheartedly agree, and the Comelec has no option but to push the elections on the scheduled date.

Comelec officials point out that it would take 120 days to put into operation a manual count, or four months, from February to May. Former Senate President Jovito Salonga, one of those vigorously opposing a postponement of the elections, argues that the last national and local elections in 1998 officially began in February, during which 45 days were allotted for the campaign. In this year's elections, the campaign period starts on Jan. 15, which means, according to Salonga, that the Comelec has a bigger head start to get its work done. Salonga believes it can be done. But the Comelec has to get cracking now, to get the voting machinery going. A lot of work has to be put in, and above all, concentration on the job with a minimum of distractions.

* * *

There are warnings from opposition leaders that trouble would erupt if LDP presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. loses. They base their assertion on the assumption that he cannot lose because he is very popular.

Such an assumption is open to question. I have been going around the country and interviewing people from all walks of life and views I have heard reinforce the popular thinking that FPJ draws his strength from the *masa*, classes D and E, which command a sizable vote of about 80 percent. If these classes go solid for FPJ, then the presidency is in the bag for him. But interestingly, I also note that there are many folks from these two classes who are not so hot on FPJ. They like him personally, but they also realize that another actor could be a monumental disaster for the country.

This is what I call the "*dalâ* factor." There are citizens who won't vote for FPJ because of their disillusionment with Joseph Estrada's performance in office. The question is, just how big is this factor among the *masa*? This is something that political scientists and strategists ought to measure. But I to say that FPJ is an absolute shoo-in is to misread the political reality.

* * *

My apologies to retired PC Brig. Gen. Juanito Aquias, whose name came out here as Aquino. Probably I was thinking of Rep. Agapito Aquino or Raul Roco's vice presidential candidate Herme Aquino as I wrote that item about the general, who is our good friend and classmate of my husband in PMA Class '61. Johnny had called to deny that he and retired Brig. Gen. Ismael Musico signed a manifesto that appeared recently in the INQUIRER, calling for no elections and an alternative government.

* * *

Jan. 25 is a red-letter day for devotees of the Sto. Niño, especially the Congregacion del Santisimo Nombre del Niño Jesus which marks its 25 years of existence. Every year for the past 24 years, high couture designer Ben Farrales, its founder, has orchestrated the celebration of the Sto. Niño with more dedication than he has demonstrated in any of his many successful fashion launches. Farrales has seen the society through its metamorphosis into some sort of an exclusive gentlemen's club, with very exclusive membership requirements. The recently published book on the Congregacion narrates its various activities as well as the growth in membership. A chapel has been built in honor of the Sto. Niño, where well-known furniture designer and manufacturer Antonio Adriano has created an impressive altar.

The traditional annual fiesta in honor of the Sto. Niño will be celebrated on Jan. 25, under the chairmanship of Farrales and Ogee Atos. There will be an exhibit of Sto. Niño images, capped by a grand procession at 3 p.m. with various *carrozas* parading from Philtrade to the Quirino Grandstand, followed by a fireworks display. Novena Masses will be held from Jan. 15 daily at the PNB Hall at 7 p.m. The exhibit will be formally opened in Jan. 15 and last until Jan. 23 with viewing hours from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Left's version of the '3 Gs'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"GUNS, goons and gold" are the proverbial "Three Gs" of Philippine elections, the factors that undeniably influence—for the worse—the outcome of electoral contests in this country and thereby frustrate the people's will in their choice of candidates and the kind of politics in this country.

First articulated by the late former Sen. Ninoy Aquino, if memory serves me right, the "Three Gs" refer to the use of armed might, violence and cheating (by paid goons who would disrupt the voting and counting procedures, often by snatching the ballot boxes themselves) and money (to buy votes, buy influence or buy victory) to derail the democratic process.

For decades now, concerned citizens, citizens' groups and progressive politicians have decried the use of the "Three Gs" during elections. Greater vigilance, the emergence of electoral watchdog groups and a free media have served to curb the more excessive uses of the "Three Gs" in recent elections, although cheating at the polls has taken on new, more high-tech forms, like *dagdag-bawas*.

But the "Three Gs" are still around, and being practiced by, of all people, leaders of leftist armed groups that profess a desire to change Philippine society by overhauling its unjust structures. How can they hope to initiate change, though, when they rely on guns, goons and gold not just to influence the outcome of elections and frustrate the people's will, but also to raise money to fuel their rebellion? Is this a case of the end justifying the means?

* * *

THE USE of "guns, goons and gold" by the National Democratic Front and its armed component, the New People's Army, during elections is no secret. But both candidates and political parties have rarely commented on the issue until the party-list group Akbayan dared "bell the cat," as it were, through a bill filed recently by Party-list Representatives Loretta Ann Rosales and Mario Aguja.

In towns and even cities where the NPA "control" large areas, the communist rebels have made it a practice to demand, or extort, money and other valuables from candidates running for office in exchange for "PTCs" or permits to campaign. The demand carries with it an implicit threat: a candidate who ventures into NPA-controlled areas will meet with violence unless he or she carries a PTC.

It's a practice the NDF and the NPA don't even bother to deny. They are, in fact, crowing about it. Jorge Madlos, NDF spokesperson in Mindanao, was quoted as claiming that his group has collected "millions" in PTC fees "not only from candidates allied with (President Macapagal-Arroyo) but also with presidential aspirants Raul Roco and Panfilo Lacson." "No one is exempted from taxation," Madlos told reporters.

Ka Roger Rosal, leader of the NPA in southern Luzon, asked about the PTC fees, said he saw nothing wrong with these as these merely expressed "the candidate's recognition of our political control" over an area.

The same report quoting Madlos said candidates for town mayor are usually "assessed" P50,000; those for city mayor P100,000; those running for a congressional seat P300,000; and those for governor, P1.5 million. Senatorial candidates are also believed to have been asked to pay P1 million each presumably for a nationwide PTC.

* * *

"THIS practice... goes against the principles of human rights, political freedom and of electoral reform that the NDF, CPP and NPA themselves profess to adhere to, among others, in their peace negotiation with the government," Rosales and Aguja state in their explanatory note. "This practice curtails the freedom of citizens and their political parties and organizations to campaign anywhere in the country for their candidates and their political and electoral platforms, as well as the right of voters to be freely informed about candidates and political parties contending for public office."

The bill thus seeks to make the practice of charging or demanding PTC fees an electoral offense under our election laws. When I asked if candidates who can be proven to have paid PTC fees would be answerable as well, Rosales said that provision is still under discussion.

But already, it seems the anti-PTC campaign is enjoying bipartisan and even multi-partisan support, with HB 6581 counting 48 co-authors, including most of the party-list representatives.

* * *

INTERESTINGLY, none of the representatives of Bayan Muna have signed on as co-authors. Bayan Muna is a party-list organization identified by many with the extreme Left, making a huge and impressive "debut" in Philippine politics by winning some 1.5 million votes during the 2001 elections, the largest number of votes any party-list group has ever garnered. In fact, so confident are the organizers of Bayan Muna that its No. 2 and No. 3 nominees, Crispin Beltran and Liza Masa, recently resigned from the House to help set up two separate party-list groups: Anakpawis, for labor and urban poor, and Gabriela Women's Party.

If reports are to be believed, at least some of those 1.5 million votes can be credited to the PTC collectors and NPA commanders, who summoned local candidates and officials and informed them that they were to campaign for and support only a single party-list organization. The reports come not just from workers and supporters of other party-list groups, but also from local officials and candidates.

Most recently, Bayan Muna head Satur Ocampo announced the party's choice of national candidates they would support, declaring that the organization could "guarantee" a minimum of two million organized votes. I wonder: Would the boast still hold water without the Left's own version of the "Three Gs"?

Giving credit

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

I'LL bet you didn't know that inoculation originated among the Hindus, Chinese and Persians. During inoculation, a person was directly infected with the disease using pus from a victim. The inoculation transplanted the pock, which resulted in producing an active case of the disease. The person inoculated expected /hoped to have a milder attack.

In China, inoculators clothed their patient in a shirt soaked with smallpox pus. Blowing dried contents of a pustule into the subject's nostrils was another method. Undoubtedly, a lot of people were killed in this manner.

In India, the patient received several scratches on the arm. These were then covered with a bandage wet with smallpox pus mixed with water from the Ganges. This method produced fewer fatalities.

Inoculation spread to the Near East. Smallpox pus was placed beneath the skin. A small puncture was made in the arm and pus rubbed into the wound.

In Turkey, it was a kind of social affair according to Lady Mary Montagu. Groups of 15 or 16 people would gather and an old woman would come and inoculate them.

In the Americas, smallpox was unknown until the arrival of the Europeans.

Although it was known in the Philippines, the first known record of smallpox was in 1591 when an epidemic nearly decimated the population. A third of the people in Balayan were affected and few survived it. Fr. Francisco Colin, S.J., tells us that the disease afflicted Manila and its environs as well and that most of those affected were children and old people. Thankfully a scientist called Jenner discovered vaccine 5 years later.

Inoculation in Europe began in the 18th century. While the rest of Europe argued its merits, Charles IV (whose daughter, the Infanta Maria Luisa, had been afflicted) sent seven physicians and their assistants, 27 children (who carried the vaccine subcutaneously) with their mothers and nurses to the New World to inoculate the populace and to prepare other children to carry out the mission in the Orient. These children were adopted by the King as "*hijos especiales de la patria*," with the government taking charge of their education and maintenance until they reached adulthood. A royal edict directed all government functionaries and religious authorities to have the masses inoculated for free, teach the authorities in the colonies the proper method of preparing the vaccine and the manner of transmission, and organize municipal juntas to prepare records of the work done and maintain the vaccine for the future.

The expedition left the port of Coruña on the ship "Maria Pita" on Nov. 30, 1803. Their work in Latin America took two years, after which 25 orphaned Mexican children from Guadalajara, Queretaro, Fresnillo, Sombrerete and Zacatecas were fitted out to bring the vaccine to the Orient (including Canton and Macao), arriving in Manila in 1805. The trip took them 67 days.

As an example, the children of Governor Rafael de Aguilar were the first to be inoculated and within a few days 6,000 were vaccinated in Manila and Cavite alone. The humanitarian act is remembered with that statue of Carlos IV in front of the Manila Cathedral. Although there was a plan to erect a monument almost immediately, it was not until 1824 that this was inaugurated. Fortunately it survived the destruction of Intramuros.

When the Americans occupied the country, there was already in existence an institute for vaccination with a staff of 128, including vaccinators stationed in each municipality. Manila at the opening of the 17th century was "far in advance of any city in the English colonies for more than a century and a half to come," according to the preface to "The Philippine Islands." In 1577, Manila had a public dispensary which was converted into a hospital the following year and has continued to exist to this day as San Juan de Dios Hospital. In 1587, the Dominicans established San Gabriel, a hospital for the Chinese. (It was not until 1751 that the Pennsylvania General Hospital, the first hospital in the original 13 colonies, was established.)

To give them credit, it was the Americans who institutionalized vaccination and imposed a penalty on all who ignored the law. (For some reason not clear to me, it seems like we have to be threatened with bloody murder before we do anything even for our own good.) This was despite the fact that the disease would claim thousands, sometimes as many as 40,000, the majority of whom were children.

Finally after 200 years, Dr. Francisco Javier de Balmis, the physician who accompanied the children around the world, will be recognized at the instigation of the Mexican Embassy. A bust of the doctor and the names of the Mexican children will be erected in the lobby of the new center for vaccines in Alabang this February. An inter-agency task force was created for the project by the Department of Health, consisting of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Tourism, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Manila City Hall, Society of Philippine Health History, Office of the Press Secretary and the University of Sto. Tomas.

The children and the doctor played a pivotal role in the control and prevention of smallpox in the Philippines. It's time we paid our dues.

Different

YOUNG BLOOD

Jonas Soltes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MY friends say I'm eccentric. I act and think differently from others of my age. I favor Frank Sinatra's music over Eminem's. I prefer Queen and Bee Gees to Limp Bizkit and Linkin Park and I know the lyrics of songs of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s but not those of current hits.

I'm different not because I was born different. I'm different because I always choose to be different. I always take the "road less traveled." And being different has been a blessing to me.

Like my peers, I enjoy watching "X-men" and other TV cartoon series to the extent that I identify myself with Cyclops. But when it comes to movies, I like better those Montgomery Clift or Alec Guinness films than those of Tom Cruise or Vin Diesel. I find "From Here To Eternity" and "South Pacific" more interesting than "The Matrix" trilogy. I was more terrified seeing Heath Ledger vomit while accompanying a prisoner sentenced to the electric chair in "Monster's Ball" than seeing Sadako in "The Ring."

When I was in elementary school in our barangay, I passed away the time in my uncle's office library reading the World Book Encyclopedia while my classmates played softball. While they were learning to play the game well, I learned the diameters of Betelgeuse, Arcturus, Vega, Rigel and Alpha Centauri and memorized the locations of independent states on the map.

In high school, I chose to get a low grade in Turbo Pascal rather than save a classmate's finished programming exercise on my diskette without him knowing, although that was what our other classmates did. There were times when I copied the answers of my seatmate during surprise quizzes in mathematics, but after realizing that there was no satisfaction getting an undeserved perfect score, I chose to get zero rather than cheat myself.

The consequence was painful: was dropped from the honors' list. I pretended that I wasn't affected but the truth was, I felt miserable inside and the feeling lasted for weeks. After that, I laughed at myself.

One of my high school teachers once asked me if I didn't envy my classmates who had mobile phones. I just smiled and said no. I said I had no use for a mobile phone since there was no cell site near our town. My parents could buy me a cell phone if I insisted yet I decided not to have something that was of no use to me just so I could be like my classmates. I also finished high school without a computer or a wristwatch.

When I didn't pass the Upcat, I felt very frustrated. I thought I should sing "My Way." However, I was relieved upon watching "Orange County." I realized that I didn't need to go to Stanford University to be a writer. It is not the school that matters. When God gives us the chance to harness our talents, He recommends no school. He just prescribes a dose of courage and determination.

I thought of becoming a teacher since teaching is the noblest profession, but that path has been taken by my mother, an aunt, an uncle, two of my siblings, and four of my cousins. I thought of studying for the priesthood, but quickly realized that I could not fulfill the vow of chastity so I decided that I would serve God by being a family man. I'm still looking for my road until now.

These days, I don't care if I am not on the list of University Honors. Awards do not motivate me. I don't care if I will not graduate summa cum laude. I don't care if my QPI (Quality Point Index) doesn't qualify me for the Dean's List. What is important is that I do not waste the money that my parents pay for matriculation. What matters most is that I am learning and not wasting my time memorizing and cramming for examinations. After all, getting an education is not memorizing formulas, theories, laws, philosophies and dates. Education is 99 percent imagination and one percent instruction. Education is learning how to live life with all its crests and troughs.

I pity those students who "burn the midnight oil" to prepare for exams. They are missing the true meaning of what it is to be educated. Yet, I cannot blame them. Nowadays, examinations are not meant to test what one has learned. Examinations test how much one has memorized. Pathetic.

I want my grade to reflect my performance. I hate teachers who give me high grades although I am not doing well in a subject as much as I despise teachers who give me very low grades when I am doing well.

I'll be different by not believing in created "truths" especially when it concerns my health. I do not believe that the customer is always right. Sometimes, the seller is right. Practice does not make perfect. Practice will only be perfect if the practice itself is perfect.

I'm young and I am sure that I will come to many more crossroads. When this happens, I'll always take the road less traveled.

To be different is not to be deviant. Being different is doing right when everybody else is doing wrong. Being different is saying no when all are saying yes. Being different is seeing blue when all are seeing red. Being different is being optimistic when all are desperate. Being different is staying fresh when all have turned rotten. Being different is having wide-open eyes when all are blind. Being different is planting flowers when all the flowers are gone to the graveyards.

It is not easy to be different. It is never easy not to do the usual things. It is very hard especially now when political ambition, power, reputation and wealth have become more valued by many than faith, hope, honesty and love. Yet, it is only when one swims against the raging current that changes are made.

If I had just played softball when I was in elementary school, I would not have known that Brazil borders 11 South American countries and one French dependency. If I had chosen to cheat myself when I was in high school, I would have been a professional cheater by now. If I were not dropped from the list of honors before, I would have killed myself when I failed to top the list of University Honors at the Ateneo de Naga University.

I would not have known that there are many ways to get rich than trafficking in drugs and destroying lives and that there are many ways to serve the people than being the president of the Republic of the Philippines. I would not have known that giving others a chance is something wonderful.

If I did not choose to be different, I would have failed to appreciate the simplicity of life and know that there is more to it than taking the overused road.

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Beyond just an academic record

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

EVER since the popular actor Fernando Poe Jr. signified his intention to run for president in the 2004 elections, there has been a lot of fuss about his qualifications, i.e., that he is just a high school dropout and therefore lacks the capacity to handle the supposedly awesome and complex office of the president of the Philippines.

Is the office of the president really that complex and awesome that it can easily overwhelm anyone who is not a college graduate or especially one who is a dropout? In short, is such a position reserved only for intellectuals or those with high educational attainments?

I submit that the presidency is just like the position of a manager or president of a typical business organization, such as a corporation or even a single proprietorship.

In fact, it is more difficult to run a business organization, such as a big corporation, than the Office of the President.

In running a corporation, you have to reckon with your competitors so that you are always on guard, mapping out strategies to outwit your competitors.

In the case of the Philippines (which is just like a big business organization or a corporation), there is no competition involved. People will even line up to pay taxes to the government. In short, what is needed is only an efficient way to collect taxes.

And, once the taxes are collected, all that is needed is to put them to good use. That means appointing the right people to make use of the taxes. In short, it boils down to sincerity and good faith in the appointment of qualified and highly competent officials to key positions in our government.

The trouble that confronted all our past presidents is that (the choosing of key officials) had to do mostly with the payment of political debts as its basis; it was always a case of politics rearing its ugly head. In short, appointments were always compromised.

FPJ's detractors also assert that even a lowly clerk in the government is required to possess some kind of a qualification. True. But then a clerk does not have the authority or power to appoint someone to work for him. The president has the power or authority to appoint any qualified person to work for him especially those with the expertise needed in a particular field.

In the end, it is the character of a person that should be the ultimate gauge whether a person is qualified to be the president of the republic. And a person's character can only be judged through his track record. Precisely, the qualifications required of a presidential candidate under the Constitution is that he be able to read and write, that he be at least 40 years old, a natural-born citizen, a registered voter and resident of the country for 10 years preceding the election.

Finally, if FPJ was not qualified, then he would not have been "Da King." The acronym FPJ would not have existed. And in the fiercely competitive world of movie-making, he would not have survived these past many years when even the big movie companies like Sampaguita, Premier and others are no more.

—ERIBERTO M. SUSON,
16-M Sanson Rd., Lahug, Cebu City

Useless and unused overpasses

I AM writing about pedestrian overpasses that are put up that nobody cares to use either because there is simp ly no need for it or because it's more difficult to do so.

You can find one such overpass newly constructed in front of the Agora Market on N. Domingo Street, San Juan. Another is near the Pinaglabanan Church along Pinaglabanan Street, San Juan. Both overpasses display the names of the mayor (JV Ejercito) and that congressman (Zamora).

Construction of these overpasses is a way for some contractors to make money. If this does not stop, people in government will continue wasting taxpayer money.

—DANNY SIGALES, Danny_Sigales@ltpi.com

12 January 2004

Editor in Chief
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Makati City

Dear Madam:

The Special Report of Mr. Tony Bergonia (PDI, issue of 01/10/04) regarding certain government computerization contracts contains inaccurate and misleading information. We believe that had Mr. Bergonia heard and considered the side of Stradcom Corporation (Stradcom), his Special Report would have been more accurate, fair and balanced.

We therefore wish to make the foremost following clarifications, particularly on the issues raised against Stradcom and the LTO-IT Project:

1. The Commission on Audit (COA) has not issued an order for the suspension of payment for services rendered by Stradcom. COA had issued a Notice of Suspension and consequently Disallowance, which in effect is requiring LTO to explain and provide supporting documents in reference to an amendment to the LTO IT Project Build-Own-Operate (BOO) Agreement. In fact, in a recent Department of Justice (DOJ) Opinion dated November 7, 2003, it is stated that LTO is not free to dispose of or withhold the fees payable to Stradcom.

2. As explained to COA, the amendment to the contract between LTO and Stradcom were reviewed and approved by - among other government agencies - the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) and DOJ, and they stated:

   2.1 Frequency of payment. When the amendment was submitted to NEDA for appropriate action pursuant to law, NEDA stated that the amendment *"need not go through the ICC re-evaluation inasmuch as the proposed amendments contained in the draft Agreement Amendment do not involve any additional undertaking for LTO and do not involve any variations in project cost and component activities, i.e. project objectives, outcomes and outputs remain intact as originally envisioned"*. And in an Opinion dated July 23, 2001, the DOJ also stated that the obligations of DOTC/LTO in the Amendment are legal, valid, binding and enforceable.

   2.2 The amendment of the original project commencement date. The amendment pertaining to the project commencement date was meant to properly state that the actual date of commencement of the Project was July 1, 1999.

   2.3 The basis of payment. The provisions of the contract are consistent with the basis that payments due Stradcom are based on the total number of daily transactions.

3. The Final Certificate of Acceptance. The issuance of the Final CAIF was a collective effort of the LTO-IT Project Management Committee and its sub-committees. All concerned parties met several times and agreed to issue the Final CAIF under LTO Resolution No. LTO-IT PMC 0068 on February 4, 2003.

   It is not true that the issuance of the Final CAIF led all the members of the LTO management and technical committees to resign. Additionally, the Executive Training Program held at Caylabne Bay Resort in May 2003 was part of the LTO-IT Project deliverables and had nothing to do with the issuance of the Final CAIF.

4. There is no overpricing in the LTO IT Project BOO Agreement. The agreement was duly approved by NEDA which provides for a yearly automatic price adjustment based on a transparent parametric formula.

It is clear that the foregoing issues were lifted from the complaint filed by an alleged group of LTO employees who called themselves the LTO Contra Corruption Alliance against former LTO Assistant Secretary Roberto T. Lastimoso with the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC). This anonymous group is apparently against the computerization of the LTO operations for reasons of their own, and are apparently taking actions to jeopardize the success of the LTO-IT Project. Moreover, Section 4 (c) of Executive Order No. 12, dated April 16, 2001, stipulates that anonymous complaints should not be given due course and/or be dismissed. We have been informed that the group's complaint was forwarded by the PAGC to the Office of the Ombudsman which reportedly dismissed the said complaint.

By way of clarification, the Board of Directors (2003-2004) listed in the Special Report is that of Stradcom and not of Stradcom International Holdings, Inc. And to dispel any erroneous conclusion or imputation, the three projects were awarded to different consortia after competitive public bidding.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

STRADCOM CORPORATION

CEZAR T. QUIAMBAO
Chairman of the Board

Advt.

The flying Pinoy

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

WITH all the publicity about 100 years of aviation, starting with the Wright brothers' historic 12-second flight in 1903, I thought we might want to look at the Pinoy's love affair with airplanes.

Surfing the Internet, I saw the announcement for a book on aviation history in the Philippines, supposedly covering the years from 1909 onwards. I have not been able to get a copy of the book, but from the title, I would presume that year marked the first flight in the Philippines. I'm afraid I don't have details on where it took place, and who was involved.

I did find a reference to a Chinese, Tan Gen (no relation), developing hydroplanes in Honolulu and launching several demonstration flights in Southeast Asia, including one in 1910 "over a 2416-meter volcano in the Philippines." (From the given height, I suspect this was Mayon.)

I also found a reference to a first flight over Manila in 1911 by an American, Bud Mars, the historic event captured on film by Albert Yearsley. Imagine how Manileños must have reacted to that first flight, probably of a small box-like flying machine similar to the Wright brothers', as it droned away in the skies.

Eventually, what finally launched commercial aviation in the United States and the Philippines was the need of humans to keep in touch. The first US transcontinental mail service flight was made in February 1920, from New York to San Francisco, a flight that took 33 hours and 20 minutes! (Today such a flight would take about six hours, non-stop.)

The Philippines, then under the Americans, adopted airmail quite soon after. I was able to reconstruct bits and pieces of our airmail history back in 2001, when the Ayala Museum had an excellent stamp exhibit that included flight covers, envelopes with clear postmarks showing when and where a flight originates and lands. Even more specific are first flight covers, which commemorate the inauguration of a new air route.

At that Ayala exhibit, there was a flight cover from 1926, marking a Madrid-to-Manila flight, showing how important links to Spain were, even after the Americans took over the Philippines. Iloilo was clearly the Queen City of the South at that time, with airmail service connecting that city to various places, including neighboring Bacolod, Baguio in the north, and Dansalan in Mindanao.

Fort Stotsenburg in Pampanga, better remembered today as Clark Air Base, was another flight hub, reflecting how early aviation in the Philippines was so connected to the American military. I was also intrigued by flights connecting to places that seem obscure now but may have been important in the past, for example between Manila and San Miguel, Tarlac, and between Angadanan, Isabela, and Laoag, Ilocos Norte.

The Ayala exhibit had a cover from the first trans-Pacific flight in 1935, that of Pan-Am's China Clipperd flying from Barnfield, Canada, to Manila via San Francisco, Honolulu, Midway, Wake Island and Guam. Actual flying time was 59 hours and 48 minutes but because of overnight stops, the total flight took all of six days. The postage for that long airmail flight was P1.50, an amount that today wouldn't even cover postage within Metro Manila.

It wasn't too long after airmail flights that passenger flights were inaugurated. We like to boast that Philippine Airlines (PAL) is Asia's first airline and indeed it is, its maiden voyage taking place on March 15, 1941, from Manila to Baguio in 45 minutes. The aircraft was a small twin-engine Beech 18 and it carried five passengers.

Airplanes have always fascinated the Filipino. We joke about how each Pinoy who leaves for an overseas trip gets sent off by the entire neighborhood or barangay, the well-wishers apparently more motivated by a picnic of sorts at the airport than sending off their barangaymate.

Some of you may remember those ads about 10 years ago selling condominiums and claiming the special attraction of being located just outside the perimeter of the Ninoy Aquino international airport. "Watch the planes take off and land!" the ads enticed potential buyers. In other countries, building an airport within earshot of a residential area is the best way to send real estate values plunging.

Seriously, planes have taken many meanings for Filipinos. For older Filipinos, the planes represented war and military might, first of the Japanese invaders, and then of the American "liberators." I put that word in quotes because those "Liberation" bombers were more destructive to Manila than the Japanese occupation forces.

Planes have also become lifelines, bringing in rescue teams and medical help in times of disasters and emergencies. In the postwar period, planes have become an icon of development, an airstrip signifying a town or city's connection to the outside world and development.

I do wonder at times if perhaps we are not moving backwards. In the 1970s, working for the Catholic Church's social action programs, I occasionally took small planes into very remote towns in Mindanao. Today no commercial airline will serve those "missionary routes," and the towns are cut off from the outside world.

Let's not forget, too, how even long-established flights between Manila and larger cities such as Legazpi or Baguio (Asia's first commercial passenger flight) are still too easily canceled when the weather's bad because their airports remain quite primitive, with inadequate safety equipment.

I will admit I do have mixed feelings about this connection between planes and development. Sometimes airstrips and planes may be ominous signs of the outside world intruding, bringing in tourists and business people who may have little interest in local development.

I also have mixed feelings about the way planes have now become so closely associated with the Filipino diaspora. Flights out of Manila are often marked by a soulful silence and muffled sobbing as departing overseas workers think of the families they're leaving behind. Happily, flights back to Manila are chaotic and noisy, as returning workers and *balikbayan* anticipate reunions, sometimes after many years, with family and friends.

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

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'Voyage of peace' draws thousands of Catholics to Cagayan Valley

By Estanislao Caldez
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LALLO, Cagayan—Thousands of Catholic devotees from Cagayan Valley flocked to this historic town on Sunday to mark the quadricentennial celebration of the miraculous Image of Our Lady of Piat.

The image arrived here from Portuguese Macao where it was fashioned by a sculptor and then brought by an intrepid friar to Piat to pacify the restive Piateños who massacred Spanish settlers for forcing them to wear shoes, hats, and formal attire on holidays.

Sunday's reenactment was dubbed as a "Voyage of Peace" and with the theme *Apo Baket Yene Tam Ngamin* (Grand Old Lady, Mother to All).

Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan celebrated a Mass and led a procession of icons of the patron saints of 35 barangays of Lallo.

Then the devotees trekked to the historical site of the former church and hospital of the parish of Tocolana which had been destroyed by a strong earthquake.

Fr. Eladio Neira, Dominican historian from the University of Sto. Tomas, talked on the history of the miraculous Image of the Lady of Piat.

Since Sunday, villagers had been holding vigil and recitation of the Rosary.

Bishop Ramon Villena of the Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya diocese will bring the image to his town. Nueva Vizcaya was formerly a part of Cagayan.

A fluvial procession will retrace its voyage from Lallo to Tuao town then to Piat in May where it will be transported by a river boat called *biray* and will be accompanied by devotees in 300 bancas.

Rome will send two papal legates for the occasion.

Group urges meat imports only from FMD-free areas

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Bio-Security Watch Philippines Inc., an umbrella organization of livestock raisers and dealers in the country, called on the Senate to expedite the passage of Senate Bill 1004 which calls for the importation of livestock and meat only from foot and mouth disease-free countries.

James Chua, national chair of the group, told reporters here that Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., chair of the Senate committee on agriculture, is sitting on the bill which was unanimously passed four months ago by the House.

Chua revealed that during the Senate hearing conducted by Magsaysay on the proposed bill, the senator turned a deaf ear on the clamor of representatives from the livestock industry calling for the immediate passage of the bill. Meat processors led by the beverage giant San Miguel Corp. were reportedly blocking the passage of the bill.

Chua claimed that the livestock sector has been losing around P1.8 billion monthly due to smuggling and importation of cheap cara-beef from India.

In 2002 alone, Chua said the meat processors imported some 54 million kilos of cara-beef from India.

"You might be surprised to learn that most, if not all, of the corn beef, hotdogs and beef loafs displayed on the shelves of grocery stores contained not beef but carabao meat," Chua said.

What is worse, he said, canned products containing carabao meat were not properly labeled, a gross violation of consumers' right.

He said meat processors imported cara-beef as it is much cheaper compared to cattle. But, Chua insisted, government must ensure that the cara-beef it is importing come from FMD-free country.

"We are not against importation, but government must ensure the meat came from safe and clean sources," he said.

The Bio-Security Watch chair further revealed that India and China were identified by the World Health Organization as FMD capital of Asia.

"If we keep on importing meat from unclean source like India, China might as well demand that its meat products be allowed entry in this country. This would surely jeopardize our livestock industry as both countries were known FMD capital of Asia," Chua lamented.

He expressed fear that the delayed passage of SB 1004 might send a negative signal especially to foreign markets. Foreign countries, he said, might take advantage by boycotting the country's livestock and meat exports. Bio-Security Watch is fighting hard to preserve and maintain the FMD-free label of Visayas and Mindanao. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Workers protest unpaid cash gift

CALAMBA CITY—More than 150 employees of a water firm here have been on protest for almost a week now because of the non-payment of the P5,000-extra cash gift they were supposed to get under an executive order signed last December.

The employees led by the Nagkakaisang Lakas ng mga Manggagawa ng Calamba Water District, began their protest on Jan. 6 through an assembly in front of the office of the government-owned and controlled company in this town.

They were able to negotiate with general manager Martin Tancangco on Jan. 7 but after almost a week of waiting, they said the extra cash gift had not yet been paid.

Yesterday, the union submitted a letter to Tancangco thanking the company for providing the first P5,000 cash gift as provided for by a Department of Budget and Management Budget Circular 2001-02 clarifying the use of available funds for extra Christmas bonus, but reiterating their call for the other P5,000 based on Executive Order 254 series of 2003.

Felix Espiel, vice president of the union, said the order authorizing the grant of extra cash gift for all government personnel management does not say that the provision is subject to availability of funds, the reason given by Tancangco to the employees to reject their demand.

Espiel said this should not be a reason for the non-provision, saying that the company generates around P10-12 million monthly.

But Paulina Samiano, administrative department manager, said the company had no sufficient funds at the moment. She said the firm would need P1.3 million to pay the 270 employees.

The INQUIRER tried to get in touch with Tancangco but was told he was in a meeting in Manila yesterday. *Clarice Colting, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

5 poll party backers die, 50 hurt in road mishap

DAVAO CITY—Five persons were killed while at least 50 others were injured when a 10-wheel truck fell into a ravine in the Island Garden City of Samal (Igacos) in Davao del Norte on Sunday.

Supt. Eduardo Reyes, Igacos police chief, said the accident happened at around 5 p.m. in Barangay Bandera. The victims had just attended a general assembly of the Bagong Alyansa sa Samal (Balasa), a political party, at the Penaplata gymnasium.

Actress Lani Mercado, wife of actor and senatorial aspirant Bong Revilla Jr., graced the assembly.

Reyes identified the fatalities as Marilyn Noquera, Rizaldy Colindres, Roniel Aque, Mario and Christopher Malinao.

He said more than 50 persons, aging three to 70 years old, were injured. Some of those injured were brought to District Hospital in Igacos, while the others were ferried through a 15-minute boat ride to Davao City.

Police said the truck driven by a certain Jun Bahian lost its brakes and fell in a ravine, throwing away its passengers. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

LTO-IT PROJECT: BANE TO CORRUPTION AND CRIMINALITY

Recognizing that information and communication technology is essential to fighting corruption, curbing criminality and making public service more efficient, the government, through the Land Transportation Office (LTO), undertook the LTO-Information Technology (LTO-IT) Project in partnership with the private sector investor to streamline its operations and eradicate graft and corrupt practices in the system.

With the LTO-IT System in place, LTO is able to raise its level of service and customer satisfaction and increase its revenue. Sadly, however, there are individuals who are bent on and have acted in conspiracy in discrediting the capability of the project. Many of these individuals may be categorized, as follows:

Grafters. Petty grafters faced with automated transactions that run by established rules, eliminate discretion and red tape.

Fixers. With LTO-IT Project in full swing, fixers who take advantage of the slow manual processes to extort money from the transacting public are being dispensed with.

Collection Users. Persons who commit fraud against government revenue collections will be easily identified and prosecuted with the use of the Revenue Collection System, which automatically reports and reconciles the financial transactions of the agency at the end of each day.

Syndicates. Syndicates operating within the LTO whose interests are threatened by the computerization of driver's license issuance, motor vehicle registration, and law enforcement and traffic adjudication. Their illegal transactions and activities are being exposed by the LTO-IT System.

Percenters. Procurement percenters who take advantage of the long, tedious and backroom operation of the procurement and supply chain will be exposed by the transparent, computerized Electronic Procurement System and rendered fossilized.

Carnappers. The time lag between the period a car is stolen, reported and alarm listed in LTO offices nationwide, which can take weeks if not months, provide the window of opportunity to register and transfer the ownership of the stolen vehicle. With the LTO-IT Project, that window of opportunity can be done in minutes with the linkage of the PNP-TMG and LTO-IT System. Statistics show that about 1,500 vehicles are stolen every year with average cost of P500,000/unit. This translates into P750 million losses to the insurance industry and uninsured owners.

Smugglers. Untaxed or underpaid motor vehicles imported into the country translate into government revenue losses estimated at P1 billion yearly, grossly affecting the viability of the country's Motor Vehicle Development Program. With computerization, the BoC and LTO-IT System can track these untaxed and underpaid imported motor vehicles and collect the right taxes for the government.

Tax Exaders. Two (2) million out of 80 million Filipinos pay income taxes to the BIR, many of whom misdeclare their true income. Purchase and ownership of motor vehicles are reliable indicators of the true income level either paid through cash or credit. Linkage between the LTO and BIR computer systems will uncover these tax evaders and generate an estimated P2 billion additional taxes yearly.

Corrupt Persons. Car ownership is probably one of the temptations a corrupt person cannot resist. If linked to Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) and the Ombudsman, the LTO-IT System will uncover these hidden signs of wealth derived from corruption.

Criminals. Killers, kidnappers, holduppers, and most criminals use motor vehicles in their activities. Identifying and apprehending them through their driver's licenses and motor vehicle plates are standard police practice. Linking the LTO with law enforcement agencies such as the NBI, PNP and AFP through their ICT system will ensure fast action to prevent, protect, apprehend and prosecute these criminals.

Terrorists. More often than not, terrorists secure a driver's license to establish identity and be able to drive a motor vehicle. With online linkage between the computer systems of LTO and the intelligence agencies - *NBI, NICA, ISAFP, PNP-IG, BID* - terrorists may be tracked and apprehended even before they can do damage.

These people fear the LTO-IT Project which the government undertook with the private sector investors who have contributed their financial and technical resources to bring good governance and modernization to public service for the benefit of the Filipino people!

Advt.

Mindanao polls emerge as one big family affair

DAVAO CITY—Old faces, mostly related to each other, continue to dominate the political landscape of Mindanao that this early, one can already conclude that governance is nothing but a family affair in this corner of the earth.

While some of those running only rose after the Edsa revolution, most of today's politicians in Mindanao are scions and heiresses of the landed clans and traditional leaders, in the case of the Moros.

In Davao del Sur, former Gov. Rogelio Llanos is staging a comeback. His line-up under the Kampi party includes a relative, Nonette Llanos.

Llanos' opponent is erstwhile political ally in the National People's Coalition (NPC), incumbent Gov. Benjamin Joseph Bautista, whose brother Claude is seeking reelection as representative for the 2nd district against their sister Lorna Bandigan.

Rep. Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur's 1st district is also seeking reelection. His wife Mercedita threw herself into the political arena and is vying for a seat in the provincial council. The couple's son, Mark, wants to become councilor of Digos City under reelectionist Mayor Arsenio Latasa's banner. Latasa's elder brother Simplicio is also running for reelection as provincial board member.

Reelectionist board member Andres Montejo's daughter Givel Mamaril is also seeking anew the mayoralty of Malalag town.

In North Cotabato, Gov. Emmanuel Piñol is into his third term and is up against former Magpet Mayor Rolando Pelonio.

Piñol's brother, Efren, will try to wrestle the mayorship of Magpet town from Pelonio's wife, Angelina.

Another brother, Supt. Pat Piñol, is running for mayor of Kidapawan City while Bernardo Jr. is seeking reelection as Kidapawan City councilor.

The fifth Piñol in the political landscape of North Cotabato is M'lang town Vice Mayor Lito Piñol, who now wants to become mayor.

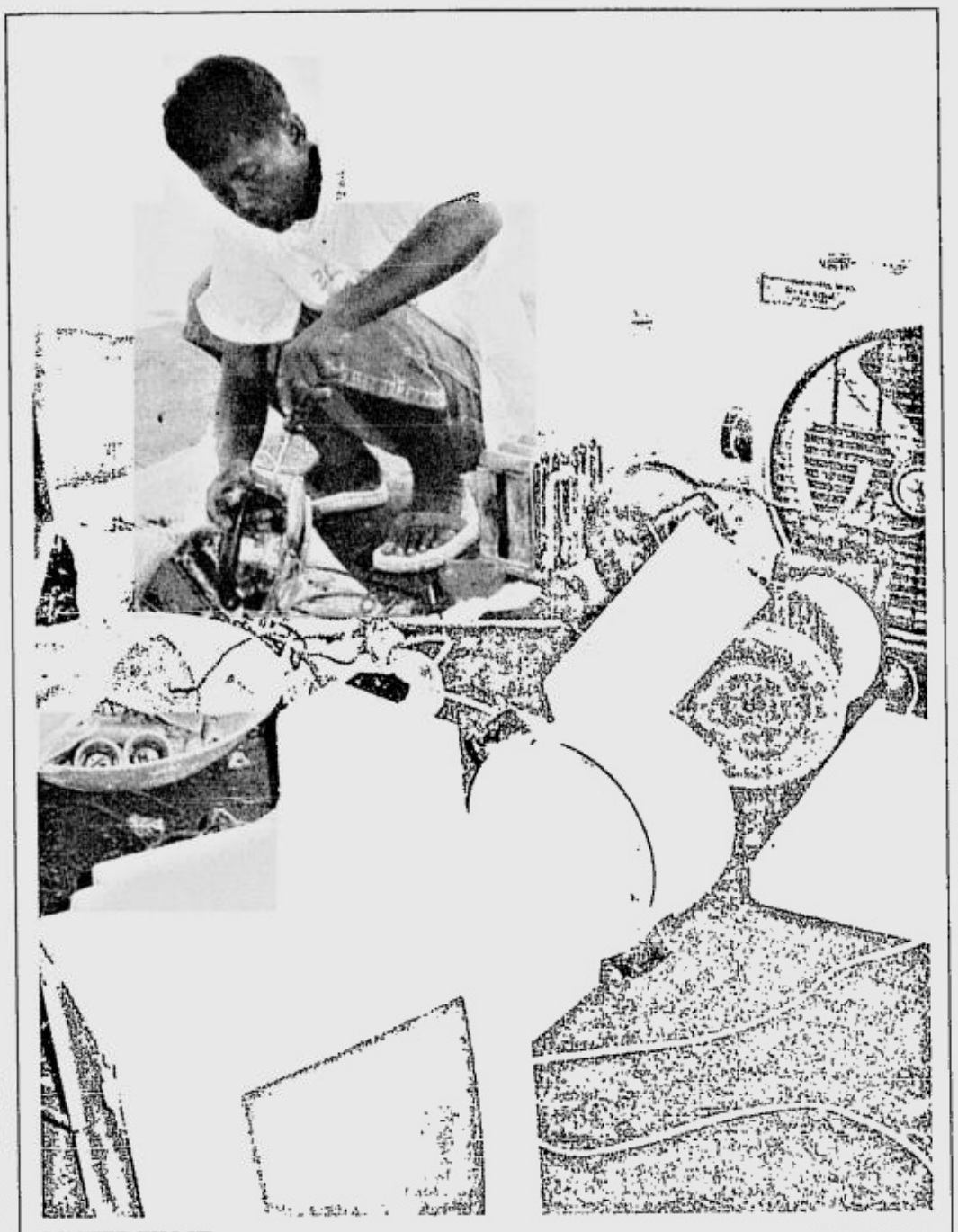
In Sarangani Province, Rep. Erwin Chiongbian wants another term while his daughter Mary Bridget Chiongbian-Huang is running for vice governor.

Sultan Kudarat Gov. Pakung Mangudadatu also wants reelection while his son, Lutayan town Mayor Suharto Mangudadatu, is aiming for Congress.

In Maguindanao, Bai Sandra Sema, wife of Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema is eyeing the position of 1st congressional district Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, whose term would end soon.

But Dilangalen has anointed his wife, Bai Sendig, to succeed him.

In the provincial level, Gov. Andal Ampatuan is seeking another term. His sons Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr. of Datu Unsay town and Mayor Zaldy Ampatuan of Shariff Aguak are also up for reelection. *Ryan D. Rosauro, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Franklin M. Caliguid, Grace Cantal-Albasin, Nash B. Maulana, Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Aisha A. Echavez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

MISTER FIX-IT
Talent is all it takes for this man to put to good use again what many others consider waste. Computer monitors, a forsaken rice cooker, electric fans turn up parts that this scrap metal trader in Davao City first detaches for future use before the entire junk is sold.

Comelec places Abra under its control

BAGUIO CITY—Abra has been declared an election hot spot because of violence caused by intense political rivalries, a top police official said.

Senior Supt. Rodrigo Licudine, Cordillera police director for operations, said Abra is the only province in the Cordillera that has been placed under the control of the Commission on Elections.

Licudine said Lagayan town in Abra has been placed under the police's area of immediate concern.

Armando Velasco, Comelec regional director, said Abra was also placed under Comelec control in the 2001 elections because of incidents of pre-election violence.

He also said the police are monitoring potential hot spots in the Cordillera region such as the boundaries near Maligcong in Abra, Balbalan in Kalinga, Tinoc in Ifugao and Buguias in Benguet. Communist rebels are often sighted in these areas.

"Ambushes might happen anytime in these areas. These incidents might be perceived as an embarrassment to the government," Licudine said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

20 Chinese suspected of poaching sea turtles nabbed in Palawan town

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Twenty Chinese poachers and four Filipinos on board FB Sea Lion I were apprehended last Saturday near Mangsee Island in the municipality of Balbac, Palawan by village officials and elements of the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Marines.

The authorities found in the vessel 40 slaughtered turtles, six live turtles and several bottles of formalin.

Pisto Jamdin, barangay captain of Mangsee Island, said the Chinese and Filipinos were on board a vessel with registry at Cebu City and owned by Sea Lion Fishing Corp.

The formalin found in the vessel was apparently used for preserving the stuffed turtles.

Jamdin said his neighbors saw two more fishing vessels in their area.

The Chinese purportedly operate in Philippine waters with the help of Filipino fishermen to avoid being charged with poaching just like what happened in the past.

Their visa found in the vessel appeared to be falsified and they had no working permit issued by the Philippine government, Jamdin said.

The Filipinos on board told him that they served as guides to the Chinese to show them the rich fishing grounds in Palawan, he said.

The Filipinos and Chinese usually meet at the Kalayaan Islands. The Chinese then transfer to the Filipino registered vessel when they enter Philippine territory.

The Filipinos added that they had already been to the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park, the only natural marine heritage site in the Philippines.

Tubbataha Management Office Park director Angelique Morato-Songco confirmed that FB Sea Lion I was the same vessel apprehended in Tubbataha before Christmas last year.

It had only eight Chinese and four Filipinos on board at that time.

The vessel was released because no charges were filed since nothing was found in it that would link them to illegal fishing activities.

Songco added that the Chinese are not supposed to fish with Filipinos because it is prohibited by the law.

Authorities at Balabac are now waiting for the advice of the Western Command for the disposition of the case.

The Chinese and Filipinos on board Sea Lion might be charged with violation of the Fisheries Code for catching and killing endangered species and could be punished with 12 to 20 years imprisonment. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Marcos' 'umbrella man' runs again

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAN JUAN, Ilocos Sur—The late President Ferdinand Marcos' "umbrella man" is making a comeback.

Former San Juan town Mayor Benjamin Sarmiento filed on Monday his certificate of candidacy for mayor here under the Lakas-CMD in his bid to take back the mayoral post now occupied by his son, Bernard Sarmiento.

"I want again to offer my services to the people," Sarmiento told the INQUIRER.

Sarmiento was mayor of San Juan from 1988 to 1998 until he supported his son's bid in 1998 and 2001.

He is being challenged by Amelia Vitonio, former education district supervisor of San Juan.

Sarmiento, a high school graduate, first served Marcos as errand boy in 1965. He later became cook of Marcos when the latter was Senate president.

In 1967, he joined the Presidential Guard Battalion, then headed by the late Gen. Fabian Ver.

As one of the close-in security aides and the "umbrella man" of Marcos, he accompanied the late dictator in the latter's state visits, including those to the United States.

When Marcos was flown to Hawaii after being toppled in the 1986 Edsa I uprising, Sarmiento decided to stay behind and go back to San Juan.

He tried his hand in politics in 1988 when he ran and won as mayor of this town. He served for three terms until 1998 when he yielded the mayorship to his son Bernard.

After 1998, he became a full-time farmer and raised hogs and carabaos.

In his comeback, Sarmiento said he was confident he would get back the support of his townmates. "If I lose I will accept defeat, if I win I will accept the responsibilities," he said.

His main platform is to make major changes in running the municipal government. "It should be run like a private company. The municipal government should try to find ways to earn money that would be returned back to the people through the different services," he said.

PAF starts probe of chopper crash

CEBU CITY—The Philippine Air Force has started its investigation of the crash of a PAF Huey helicopter on Friday afternoon at the South Reclamation Area in Cebu City while it was having a flight training mission.

A press release from the Villamor Air Base on Saturday said that an Aircraft Accident Investigating Team was still determining the cause of the accident.

"Based on the aircrew's account, the aircraft suddenly went on an uncontrollable rotation in one direction ... they were terminating a simulated emergency landing procedure on a vacant lot somewhere in the reclamation area across Cebu City," the press statement said.

The press statement added that pilot Capt. Jovan Morada immediately recognized the dangerous situation and performed appropriate emergency procedures and shut off the engine without delay to avoid fire.

All of the four passengers were safe but two of them suffered minor injuries.

The passengers were identified as Capt. Jovan Morada, the instructor pilot; 1st Lt. Dante Aquino, student pilot; and two crews: S/Sgt. Mario Demata and S/Sgt. Robin de Guzman.

The aircraft suffered substantial damage.

Lt Col. Romulo Pobre of the 205th Tactical Helicopter Wing said the accident occurred at 3:50 p.m., almost two hours after they started the flight training mission.

Hueys are Vietnam War-vintage helicopters which the Philippine military inherited from the US armed forces.

The helicopters were hand-me-downs from the United States under the Philippines-US military assistance agreement.

The helicopters suffered numerous accidents in the past that some PAF pilots had called them "flying coffins." *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Gloria aide in Bicol denies hand in 'jueteng'

LEGAZPI CITY—Amid the increasing controversy on the resurgence of "jueteng" operations in the Bicol region, Presidential Assistant for Bicol Affairs Undersecretary Mario Espinosa vehemently denied having a hand in the illegal numbers game.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, he said he never allowed the existence of jueteng.

Espinosa admitted that he himself got feedback that even his name is being dragged in jueteng operations.

He said it doesn't follow that if he's the presidential assistant for Bicol, he has the authority to approve jueteng.

"They should not compare me to my predecessor, the former presidential assistant during the Estrada administration, who had been involved in the same controversy," he said referring to Anton Prieto, who was also among those charged with plunder together with the deposed President.

Espinosa said he wanted to maintain the integrity of his office in Bicol, which represents the Office of the President.

"I was detailed here in Bicol to bring the President's remaining economic project for the region."

Espinosa added that he has yet to talk to the Bicol police chief, although he had already talked with Albay police director Senior Supt. Pedro Tango, who even came from DILG's Task Force Jericho and must have knowledge on the issue.

Espinosa quoted Tango's explanation: "There had been no jueteng operations for two weeks now in my jurisdiction in Albay."

According to Espinosa, Tango vowed to validate the existence of jueteng in the province. He, however, said he strongly believes in the saying where there's smoke, there's fire.

Espinosa said he was very upset after his name was implicated in illegal gambling.

"Much to my surprise, I even received reports that I'm one of those with 'payola' and had approved its operations," he said.

Reports have it that Espinosa is enjoying a regular monthly take from jueteng operations to the tune of P2.5 million.

Espinosa said he does not have any idea how the illegal numbers game works since they don't have such in Masbate where he resides.

Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. vowed to quit his post if he failed to curb jueteng last year.

The recent emergence of jueteng in Bicol and in other areas of the country had been attributed by residents to the fund raising scheme of politicians in preparation for the fast approaching campaign period.

Espinosa, however, said there are many other ways politicians could raise funds.

"The most affected here are our countrymen. The politicians are getting their money through jueteng and it is this same money that the politicians would pay to them during the elections," he said.

He said he would report this to the President to inform her that Bicol is not free from jueteng. *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Doctor shot dead

ILAGAN, Isabela—A doctor was shot and killed by a lone gunman on Friday while he was walking with his wife in Barangay Calamagui 2nd here, police said. Mariano Lim, 72, a mayoral candidate in this town in 1995, died of a bullet wound in the face. His wife was unhurt. Police said the gunman escaped on a motorcycle. Lim served for three terms as Ilagan councilor in the early 1980s and was elected as provincial board member for two terms. He ran but lost in the mayoral race here in 1995. Police ruled out politics as a motive in the killing, saying the victim had retired from politics eight years ago.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

2 die in Isabela fire

CORDON, Isabela—Two people were killed on Jan. 4 in a fire that razed a house in Barangay Centro here, police said. The charred bodies of Estela Baldonado, 73, and Elpidio Baldonado, 40, were found in one of the rooms of the house. The fire reportedly started in the kitchen. Police placed the damage at P500,000.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

No firecracker deaths

CAMP GEN. ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—Police officials said the firecracker and pyrotechnic industry in Bulacan posted a "zero fatality" rate in firecracker production sites in at least six towns here. Records from the Bulacan police showed that no one was killed from accidental blasts in factories and stores in Bocaue, Sta. Maria, Baliuag, Guiguinto, Angat and San Rafael towns, where manufacturing sites are concentrated. The records also showed that there were only four firecracker factory explosions in the province from January to Dec. 30, 2003. Four workers were hurt in these incidents in Bocaue, Sta. Maria and Baliuag.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

4 killed in collision

SANTA, Ilocos Sur—Four persons were killed while 21 others were hurt after a van collided with a passenger jeepney along the national highway in Barangay Mabilbila here on Jan. 2. Police identified the fatalities as Danny Parada, 38; Romana Vesidas; Rogelio Andres, 60; and Gregorio Pascua, 65. Seven passengers of the van and 14 passengers of the jeepney were hurt due to the collision's impact. Police said the Laoag City-bound van driven by Emmanuel Papa overtook another vehicle but the driver failed to avoid hitting an oncoming jeepney. SPO1 Cesar Ballesteros, case investigator, said the van came from Baguio City while the jeepney passengers were mostly carpenters going to their work site in Narvacan town.

Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Rape suspects nabbed

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Police arrested two suspected rapists in separate occasions in Cabuyao and Biñan, Laguna. Police arrested a rape suspect identified as Brigildo L. Gera, 61, of Purok 5, Barangay Marinig, Cabuyao, on Jan. 6 by virtue of a warrant of arrest issued by the Municipal Court Judge in Cabuyao. In Biñan, police arrested Rey Peña, 43, at his residence in Dimaranan Subdivision, Barangay De la Paz by virtue of a warrant of arrest issued by the Biñan Municipal Trial Court for acts of lasciviousness.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Rivals want 'San Chai' disqualified from polls

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

IS IT her fault if she looked like "San Chai" of the hit chinovela Meteor Garden?

And now that Malabon mayoralty bet Jeannie Sandoval has adopted "San Chai" as a nickname for the elections, some people want her disqualified.

A petition has been filed by two Malabon residents with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) seeking to bar her from gunning for the top local government post.

But Sandoval's camp is unperturbed. Rep. Ricky Sandoval, Jeannie's husband, told the INQUIRER yesterday they had expected these attacks.

Sandoval is up against acting mayor Jayjay Yambao, Sen. Tessie Oreta's brother-in-law, Canuto Oreta, and Melencio Roxas Jr.

Alex Rosete, Sandoval's public relations officer, said their legal team was already preparing a response to the petition seeking her disqualification.

Aside from allegedly misrepresenting herself to the public by using the nickname San Chai, Sandoval was also questioned about her residency in Malabon.

San Chai is played by Taiwanese actress Barbie Xu.

Rosete said that because of Sandoval's Chinese looks, they thought of using San Chai as her nickname to catch the public's attention.

During fiestas and gatherings last year, posters and fans with Sandoval's picture superimposed with the members of the popular F4 band were distributed.

In response to the questions about her residency requirements, Rosete said Sandoval had been a registered voter of Malabon City for two years. She also has businesses in the city and is the wife of the city's congressman, Rosete added.

Sandoval's husband shrugged off the issue. "Anybody can use whatever nickname he wants," he said.

METROBRIEFS

Slain over blouse

IRENE Panganiban, 19, of Lanting Street, Eastern Bicutan, probably did not expect that not returning the blouse she borrowed from Rakel de la Cruz, 22, of Room 111 Building I, Centennial Village, Taguig, would lead to her losing her life. De la Cruz reportedly met Panganiban along Kasuy Street in Western Bicutan at about 8:30 p.m. and demanded the blouse that she borrowed. When she could not produce the dress, de la Cruz allegedly pulled out a knife and cut her throat. *Margaux Ortiz*

Drunk stabs sister

BECAUSE of drunkenness, Joseph Torres, 24, accidentally stabbed his sister, Jacquelyn, 19, in the neck. It was 2:30 p.m. the other day when Joseph and his friends had a drinking session inside their house on Gov. Pascual Avenue, Tinejeros, Malabon City. When he got drunk, Torres became unruly and tried to grab the knife Jacquelyn was using to prepare dinner. During a struggle, the drunk accidentally hit Jacquelyn in the neck. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Tit for tat

JOSE Niel Lopez, 35, of Sitio 1, Sangandaan, Caloocan City, died of two stab wounds in his chest after he was attacked by Alexander Delos Santos Sunday 2 p.m. Investigators said the two figured in a stabbing incident a year ago, where it was Lopez who allegedly stabbed Delos Santos. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

DIESEL AT P16.50 TO P18.05 PER LITER

Bus groups want P2 hike

By Tina Santos

BUS OPERATORS all over the country are demanding a P2 increase in the minimum fare following the latest round of oil price hikes.

The Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa), Intercity Metro Bus Association (Imba), Philippine Bus Operators Association of the Philippines (PBOAP) and the Bulacan Association Transport Organization (Bato) filed separate petitions before the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) yesterday.

Some of the officials of the bus associations said they were initially hesitant to file the petition because some members were afraid of adverse reaction from commuters and the public.

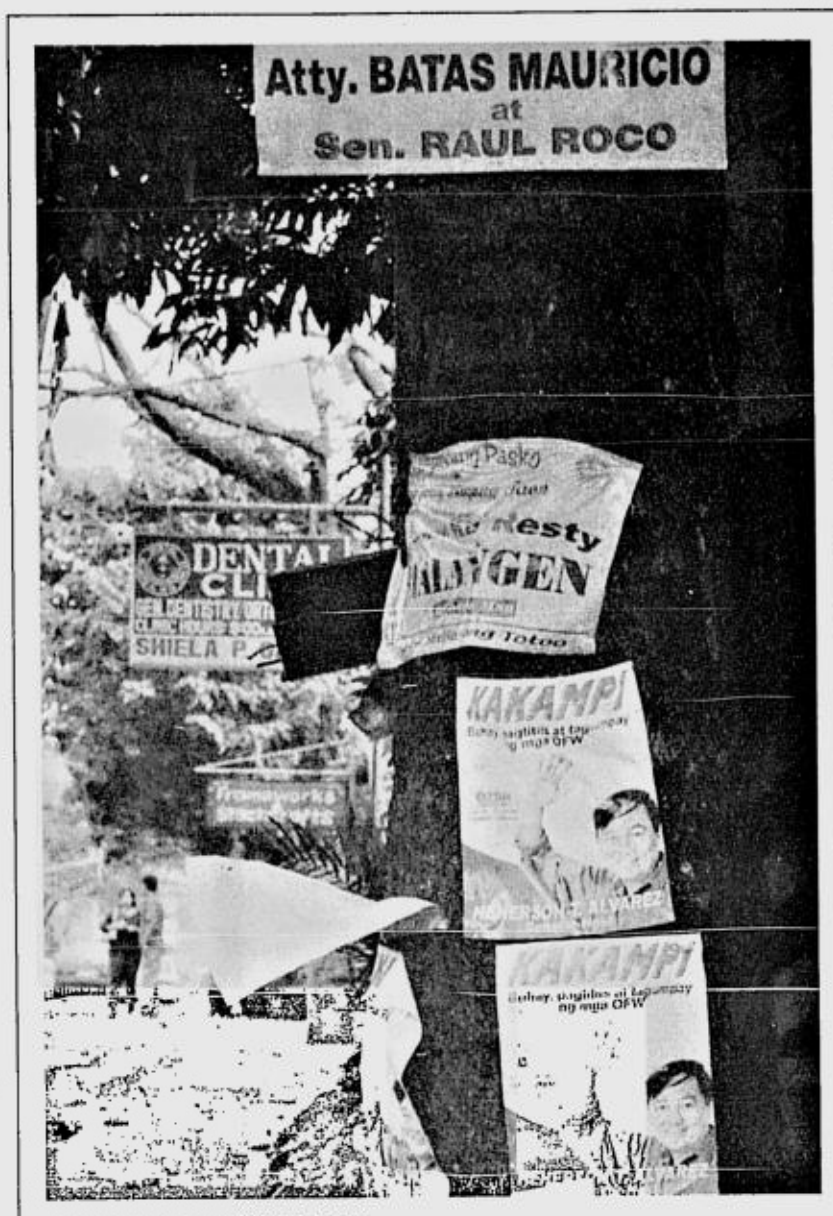
"But we could no longer afford not to increase fare because oil companies have again raised their prices," one official explained.

In its petition, Imboa is asking for an additional P2 to the minimum fare and 37 centavos for the succeeding kilometer, while Imba wants P1.50 a hike and 90 centavos for each succeeding kilometer.

On the other hand, operators and drivers in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, which comprise the PBOAP, are asking for a P2 hike and P1 for the succeeding kilometer, while Bato is demanding for a P1.50 hike with P1 for each succeeding kilometer.

The operators cited the recent oil price increase, the depreciation of the peso and the increase in the price of spare parts as the reason for their demand.

The price of diesel, which most buses use, now range from P16.50 to P18.05.



A VICTIM OF 'VIOLENCE'
The election season is more and more becoming evident as trees become unwilling victims of a form of election violence— the attack of poster-plastering supporters, who post early campaign materials on all available space in the Metropolis. EDWIN BACASMAS

U-turn slots on C-5

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is set to implement the U-turn or clearway scheme on C-5 Road next week.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said the scheme would be implemented from Ortigas Extension to Libis beginning Monday.

Vergel de Dios said the agency already installed three U-turn slots in front of Eastwood, The Spa and the Acropolis Subdivision.

"The scheme will ensure non-stop traffic in C-5 next week," Vergel de Dios said.

Under the scheme, all the intersections along C-5 will be closed and motorists will be asked to use the U-turn slots.

Jhunrie

A hole you can help fill

REGALADO Ladisla is racing against time to save his 13-year-old son, Jhunrie, who has been diagnosed with ventricular septal defect (VSD).

VSD is a congenital heart condition wherein the wall separating the left and right ventricles has a hole.

Doctors at the Philippine Heart Center said that the only way for his son to survive and live a normal life was a heart surgery.

But he said the family could not afford the operation, which costs P69,228. According to him, his income as a private security officer is not enough even for their basic needs.

Thus, he is appealing to generous readers to lend him a hand in saving his son.

Kind-hearted donors can reach him at the Philippine Daily Inquirer at 897-8808 loc. 527.

Donations can also be deposited into his account at Metrobank, Account Number 504946-473-008784-8-000. *Jocelyn Uy*

A changing of guard in Marikina

By Luige del Puerto

POLITICIANS with police security detail may find themselves in the company of strangers at the start of the campaign period.

Sr. Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr., the city police director, is set to replace in March lawmen assigned as close-in security men of politicians.

Rojas said the re-shuffle would be temporary and would be meant to avoid bloody encounters during the election season.

The director explained that policemen had the tendency to develop loyalties to politicians to whom they are detailed. They become partisan and sometimes become overzealous, he added.

"We have seen cases where security men are the cause of encounters, not candidates. We want to avoid that," he said.

The police chief stressed that election violence was uncommon in Marikina but said it would be best to avoid any possibility of an armed encounter.

Rojas said contending sides would be provided security men who know each other. This way, they will unlikely pull out their guns when they meet.

The city police director added that they could even help negotiate a peaceful resolution to possible tense situations.

Why Ted Failon is not running again

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

WHY DO young people still join the New People's Army (NPA) when they know that on mere suspicion of being a government agent, a member is tortured and killed without due process?

Thousands of NPA cadres were tortured and executed in the late 1980s because they were suspected of being deep penetration agents. This was detailed in a series of articles in the INQUIRER recently.

And yet the exodus to the NPA by young people continues.

The reason? The youth's love for adventure and misplaced idealism. But the government is not doing anything about it.

The government has been remiss in educating the youth about communism, which has become a dead ideology. The school system has not made the students see the light about communism. It fails to point out that the Soviet Union, once the seat of communism, has disintegrated. Our educators fail to make students aware that China, once a fundamentalist communist country, is fast becoming socialist.

Our educators haven't made the students aware that we're the only country in Asia that is plagued with communist insurgency. Our neighbors, like Malaysia, have solved their own communist insurgency problems.

* * *

One can't blame some barrio folk for joining the NPA because they couldn't get justice in our courts. This was especially true during Marcos' martial law era when many people in the rural areas fell victim to abusive military personnel.

Members of the General Headquarters (GHQ) Battalion of the Marcos era exemplified abusive military personnel. When troops of the GHQ Battalion passed a village in its operation against the NPAs, they would shoot on sight chickens and pigs belonging to the poor barrio folk. The barrio folk didn't know where to turn for redress, and so sympathized with or joined the NPA.

But military abuses have now been minimized, if not eliminated. Complaints about abusive members are now acted on with dispatch by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. So, that takes care of the problem of abusive military personnel.

* * *

Generally, people in remote barrios don't enjoy the benefit of government presence. When they're sick, for example, no government doctor attends to them.

Another example: a farmer who loses a carabao to a thief doesn't go to the police because the station is in the town proper, which takes several hours to reach on foot. So the farmer goes to the NPAs who act on his complaint with dispatch. The carabao thief is executed.

In short, poverty on both sides—the government and the barrio folk—is at the root of the problem. The government lacks the resources to give services to the barrio folk who, because of ignorance, fall victim to NPA machinations.

* * *

Among those not running for reelection is my friend, fellow broadcaster and compadre, Ted Failon. Ted is congressman of Leyte's first district that includes Tacloban City.

Failon is not running for the Senate either, although he is high in the ratings game.

Why? Because Ted is disenchanted with being in Congress.

Ted told me that most of his fellow congressmen sign bills into law without even reading the text of those bills. There's a popular Filipino saying, "approved without thinking." In the case of many congressmen, it's "approved without knowing" what the bill is all about.

Ted also said that when he would protest some procedures during committee hearings or full congressional sessions, some of his colleagues would tell him: "*Hoy, wala ka na sa radyo o TV* (Hey, you're no longer in radio or TV)!"

In short, Ted is an oddball in Congress.

* * *

Although he didn't say so, I suspect that Ted's constituents were also the reason for his not running again.

When I was a guest in his house in Tacloban City, I noticed that early in the morning, there was a beeline of people to his house.

The people were not asking him to introduce bills at the House of Representatives that would benefit the country. They were there to ask for personal favors from their congressman.

They were asking Ted for money to pay the house rent, for fare in going to Manila and back, for medicine of a sick child, and to set up a sari-sari store.

I asked Ted what would happen if he didn't give in to the favor-seekers.

"*Eh, di hindi ka na iboboto uli* (You won't be reelected)!" was Ted's quick reply.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 13, 2004
1st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1S 1:9-20
Gospel: Mk 1:21-28

Jesus and his disciples went into the town of Capernaum and began to teach in the synagogue during the Sabbath assemblies. The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law.

It happened that a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue and he shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: You are the Holy One of God." Then Jesus faced him and said with authority, "Be silent and come out of this man!" The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

All the people were astonished and they wondered, "What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even orders evil spirits and they obey him!" And Jesus' fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

Commentary

I pity the man who had to preach in that synagogue on the following Saturday! I know how it feels: I have often had to speak after great people had finished. You feel about the size of a mouse, and very uninspired; all your ideas suddenly seem half-baked. Years ago, during the lifetime of Bernard Leach (the greatest Western craft potter of modern times), a ceramics teacher showed slides of Leach's work to his own students. To his surprise and disappointment they made almost no comment. But he noticed that from that time on they kept few of their own pieces! That is what happens when you see the work of a master. In today's reading Mark says twice that Jesus spoke "with authority." "Not like their Scribes," he added. These loved to quote; everything they said was second-hand, but Jesus was himself the source, (the "author") of what he said and did. Only once in the gospels did he give the expected reply: when the rich young man asked him what he must do to gain eternal life, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. But immediately he drew him further on and challenged him to a new way of life (Mk 10:17-21). He never leaves us with a pat answer.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Testimony of expert witness—It is important to note that the testimony of expert witnesses must be construed to have been presented not to sway the court in favor of any of the parties, but to assist the court in the determination of the issue before it. It has been said of expert testimonies: Although courts are not ordinarily bound by expert testimonies, they may place whatever weight they may choose upon such testimonies in accordance with the facts of the case. The relative weight and sufficiency of expert testimony is peculiarly within the province of the trial court to decide, considering the ability and character of the witness, his actions upon the witness stand, the weight and process of the reasoning by which he has supported his opinion, his possible bias in favor of the side for whom he testifies, the fact that he is a paid witness, the relative opportunities for study and observation of the matters about which he testifies, and any other matters which deserve to illuminate his statements. The opinion of the expert may not be arbitrarily rejected; it is to be considered by the court in view of all the facts and circumstances in the case and when common knowledge utterly fails, the expert opinion may be given controlling effect. The problem of the credibility of the expert witness and the evaluation of his testimony is left to the discretion of the trial court whose ruling thereupon is not reviewable in the absence of abuse of discretion. (People vs Baid, G. R. No. 129667, July 31, 2000) [Justice Bellosillo, Second Division, People vs Basite, G. R. No. 150382, October 2, 2003] BY R. B. VERA

Chua-Mercene; 47

HENEDINA "Hedi" Chua Mercene, wife of Airport Press Club chairman Recto Mercene, passed away last Sunday. She was 47 years old.

She is survived by her husband, Recto, and children, Mia Grace, Recto II and Danica.

Her body lies in state at the St. Alphonsus De Linguori Parish Church, Magallanes Village in Makati.

Interment will be on Saturday, at the Loyola Memorial Park in Parañaque, after the 2 p.m. Mass.

FOUR DIGIT
3 9 8 5
(In exact order)
SUERTRES
6 2 3

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E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

MEGALOTTO 6/45
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2 WEEKS FROM EXECUTION

Second man clears death row convict

By Philip Tubeza, Edson Tandoc Jr. and Christian Esguerra

DEATH ROW inmate Roberto Lara now has reason to hope for his case to be reopened and his conviction overturned.

Noel Delos Reyes, Lara's co-accused in a 1998 kidnapping case, was arrested yesterday morning in Surigao del Sur, according to Persida-Rueda Acosta, head of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO).

During a radio interview, delos Reyes said that Lara had nothing to do with the abduction of businessman Joseph Tomas Co and his assistant, Linda Manaysay, in Marikina City.

Lara and his companion, Roderick Licayan, were convicted for the crime and sentenced to death.

Lara is set to be executed on Jan. 30.

"Cleared," Acosta said of Lara. "Reyes definitely cleared him."

Delos Reyes is the second man to speak out for Lara, a construction worker.

Pedro Mabansag, another co-accused in the kidnapping case, also said that Lara had nothing to do with the crime.

Mabansag, who is Lara's uncle, was arrested in Negros Occidental on Friday.

Acosta said that Bacolod policemen Supt. Innocencio Capuno and Senior Insp. Jefferson Descallar arrested Delos Reyes in Surigao at around 1:30 a.m. yesterday.

"(Delos Reyes) said he wanted to help after hearing that Lara was going to be executed, but he could not do so because he had no money to travel to Manila," Acosta said.

She said Delos Reyes did not know that he was a wanted man, but he surrendered when the policemen arrived at his house yesterday morning.

Delos Reyes was taken to the headquarters of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response team in Camp Crame, where he joined Mabansag.

With the arrest of delos Reyes and Mabansag, the Public Attorney's Office is hoping that President Macapagal-Arroyo would stay the execution of Lara and Licayan scheduled at the end of the month.

"They should be given the chance to present new evidence," Acosta said. "We're talking of human lives here, and we can't bring back the dead, in case they turn out to be innocent."

The renewed hunt for the rest of the accused kidnappers—Alex Placido, Jojo Sajorco, Allan Placio, Dodong Adolfo and Benjie Mabansag—began after Lara swore during a conversation with Fr. Bobby Olaguer, New Bilibid Prisons chaplain, that he was not guilty of the crime.

After the conversation, Olaguer secured copies of the arrest warrants for Lara's co-accused and tracked down Mabansag with the help of the Bacolod police, said Dionisio Santiago, Bureau of Corrections chief.

On Sept. 9, 1999, the Marikina Regional Trial Court convicted Lara and Licayan and sentenced them to death them.

The Supreme Court affirmed the death sentence on Aug. 15, 2001.

The Jan. 30 date of their execution was set after the President lifted the moratorium on the death penalty.

Last week, Acosta and PAO lawyer Howard Areza, the inmates' counsel, asked Ms Macapagal to spare Lara and Licayan since not all of their co-accused have been arrested.

Acosta said that, based on the records, Licayan and Lara "appear to be the least guilty" and can still be utilized as state witnesses.

Victims face life in the streets

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo listens to stories of fire victims.

A BOY seems to ponder on what is in store for his family after Monday's blaze destroyed their home.

RESIDENTS pick up whatever they find useful to start their lives again.

PHOTOS BY ERIK ARAZAS

By Leila Salaverria

SONYA Gravoso, 44, fears she and her family would have no choice but to live in the streets.

Gravoso, one of those left homeless by the nine-hour fire that almost wiped out the Baseco Compound in Tondo, Manila, is no stranger to hard knocks, and used to eking out a living out of meager resources. But this time, she let out a cry for help.

"We have not asked for much all these years, but now we are really asking for help to let us start anew," Gravoso, speaking in Filipino, told the INQUIRER.

Gravoso used to work in a factory.

"I want to continue working, but I have tuberculosis... I could not find a job," she said.

Gravoso said that it is also an ordeal for her to scrounge the money she needs to pay for her medicine and her fare to and from the hospital.

Her husband is a shoemaker. He goes from house to house to look for broken shoes to fix. He earns an average of P100 to P200 a day.

Gravoso lives with her husband, children, a son-in-law and two grandchildren.

But with the latest tragedy, Gravoso is afraid of the real prospect of living on the streets.

Though her husband has relatives in Manila, she does not think that they could accommodate her family of seven.

Renting a house is out of the question for the family has very little money.

Also, she said she could not take back the six months worth of rent she had paid in advance since her landlord also lost her home in the fire. Rent was P800 a month.

Gravoso recalls that when the fire started, she immediately sought out her daughter and twin granddaughters, aged two, and escaped by wading in the water that surrounded the compound.

Even as the fire was raging all around them, there were opportunists who took advantage of the victims.

Gravoso said she was asked to pay a hefty sum for a boat that would take her family to safer ground. Outraged and with no money in her pocket, she turned away and sought the help of a neighbor who also had a boat.

Later, more opportunists reared their ugly heads, she said.

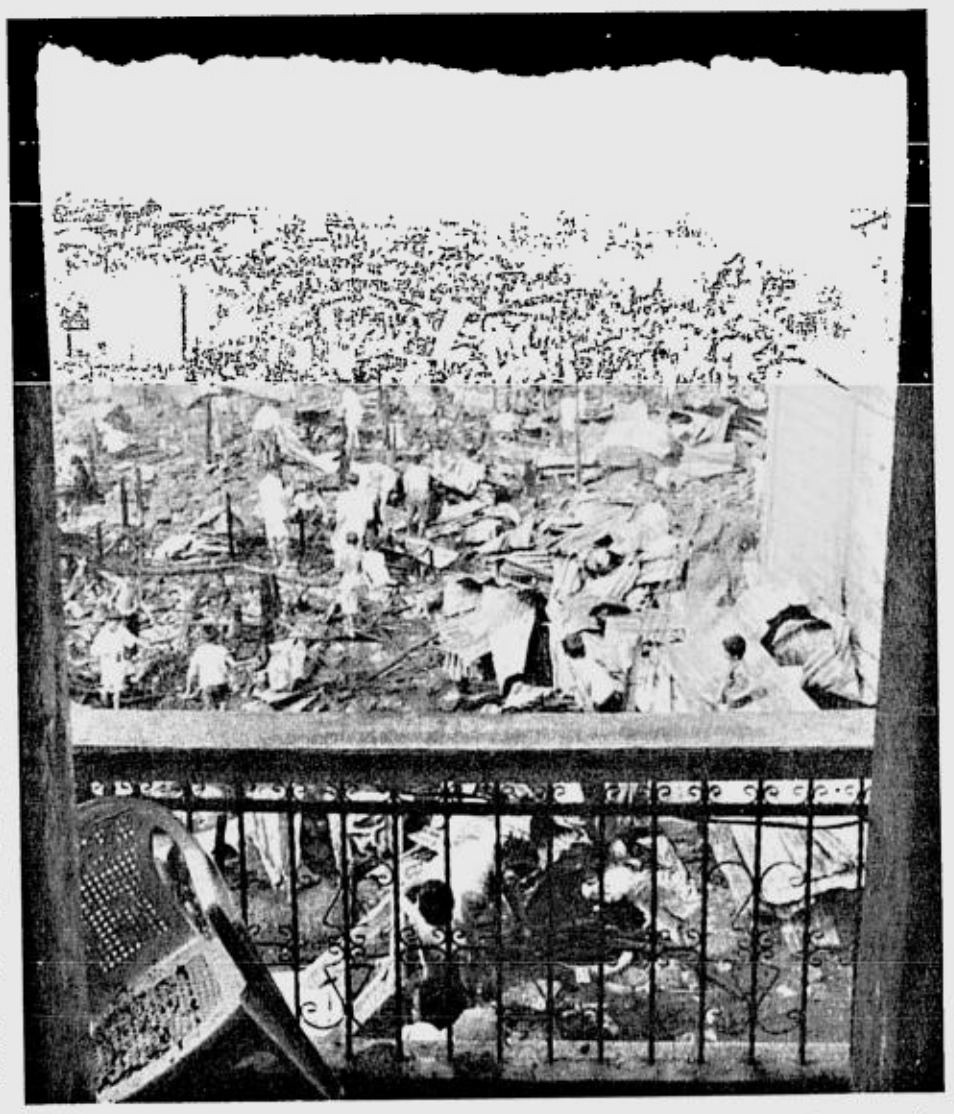
"My daughter bought new shoes, the only pair she owns, last Christmas," Gravoso said. "Even that was snatched from our bag."

She added that her neighbors also lost their valuables, not to the fire, but to thieves.

Now, the twins are in the care of Gravoso's in-laws because food is scarce at the evacuation center. Gravoso and her daughter are now at the Department of Public Works and Highways basketball court to await help along with thousands of their neighbors.

Another Baseco resident, an old man who declined to be named, said that his year was off to a very bad start.

"We feel helpless... almost all of our belongings are gone," he said, as he clutched a small plastic bag filled with his meager possessions. "What would happen to us now?"



THE VIEW from the balcony of a burned house looks out on residents of Baseco Compound scavenging for whatever they can still use from what remains of their homes.

FIRE victims have noodles for lunch.

A MOTHER holds on to her most prized 'possession' amid the destruction of yesterday's fire.

More fires break out in Camanava

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

FIRES hit a convenience store and a rubber recycling factory in the cities of Valenzuela and Caloocan, turning to ashes nearly P12 million worth of property.

The first fire began at about 10 p.m. Sunday and razed the 7-11 Convenience Store branch on MacArthur Highway, Valenzuela.

The store's water pump caught on fire. The blaze immediately destroyed the store's electric lines and air-conditioning systems, city fire investigation chief SFO3 Arnel Ibasco told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Responding firefighters managed to put out the fire an hour later.

Though only about one-third of the store's area was damaged, the estimated losses reached P1.6 million because most of the products sold in the store were either doused with water or damaged in the fire.

At 12:04 a.m. yesterday, another fire broke out in BJ Industrial Enterprises, a factory for recycling used rubbers, on Jacinto Street, Bagbaguin, Caloocan.

Stay-in supervisor Ramon Lafuente was sleeping when he was awakened by a loud explosion in the building's grinding area. He then saw that the building was already on fire.

Firefighters put out the fire three hours later.

More than P10 million worth of property was lost.

Lafuente told investigators that the fire's origin was "suspicious."

Records showed that a fire hit the factory on July 18, 2003.

Family of accused car thief cries extortion

By Alcuin Papa

TWO POLICEMEN involved in the case of a suspected car thief who was arrested in Pasig City over the weekend, have been accused of extortion and kidnapping.

The suspected car thief was identified as Michael John Tan Koa, of Valle Verde 2, Pasig City. Koa was arrested by members of the Regional Intelligence Group under Senior Supt. Bienvenido Latag, and a unit from the Traffic Management Group on Meralco Ave. last Friday.

When the lawmen checked the late model Toyota Land Cruiser (WYP 111) Koa was driving, they learned that it was a stolen vehicle.

The Land Cruiser, said to belong to a Pedro Guevarra of Quezon City, was reported stolen in Mandaluyong City in February 2002.

While Koa was being interrogated, two men who identified themselves as Jerry and Jose Rueda, called Koa's family and demanded P300,000 in exchange for the dropping of charges.

The two men identified themselves as members of the national police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Southern District Field Office.

Koa's family reported the matter to Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

The family said they had already agreed to make the down payment of P100,000 at the Nipa Hut Grill in Pasig City on Jan. 10.

But the payoff was aborted allegedly because the suspects sensed that the police were on to them.

Later, one of the suspects told a representative of the Koa family that they only wanted to help in the release of Michael.

Michael then called his family and told them he was at the CIDG field office.

A National Anti Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf) unit went to the Camp Crame office where Koa was said to be in custody.

The office turned out to be the headquarters of Regional Intelligence Office 20, a unit of the national police's Intelligence Group.

The Naktaf men talked to Chief Insp. Jose Pumida, who admitted that they had Koa in their custody.

Members of the Naktaf unit are now trying to find out the identities of the extortionists.

OLYMPIC QUALIFIER

Ladon stops Iraqi in 3

By Roy Luarca

PUERTO PRINCESA—Featherweight Joegen Ladon exploited the rawness of Iraq's Jassim Meshall to score an RSC-I (Referee-Stopped-Contest due to Injury) victory in a bright Philippine start in the 22nd Asian Boxing Championships at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum here last night.

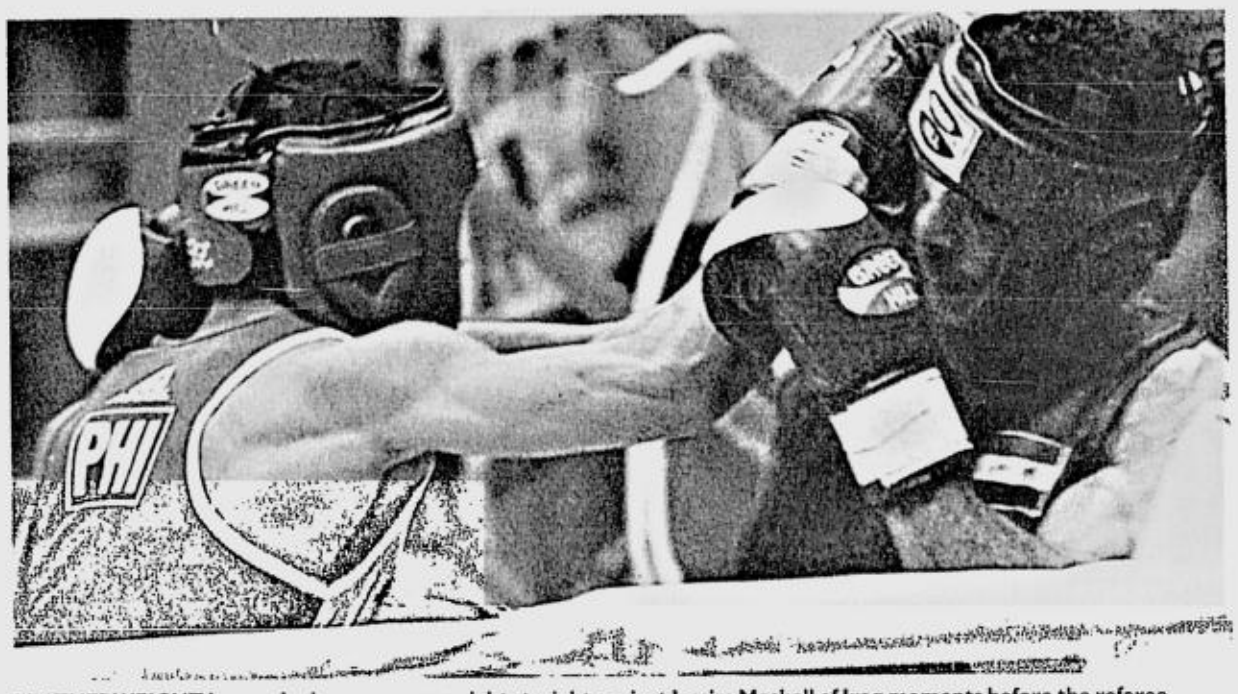
Stalking the taller but slower Iraqi right at the opening bell, Ladon connected with a solid right to the face that staggered Meshall. The Iraqi countered with a wayward cross, hurting his right wrist in the process and forcing the referee to stop the bout with 45 seconds gone in the third round.

Showing the form that landed him a spot in the 2000 World Youth Championships in Budapest, Hungary, and the gold medal in the Goa invitationals in India, the 21-year-old Ladon delighted the gallery of about 4,000 by landing punches almost at will.

He was way ahead on all scorecards when the fight was prematurely ended.

"This is a good start. Ladon is improving steadily," said national coach Boy Velasco. "He had the Iraqi right in the first round."

Ladon, a product of boxing-crazy Bago City, advanced to the round of 16 and provided the first ray of hope for the nine-man Philippine boxing team aspiring for Olympic berths.



FEATHERWEIGHT Joegen Ladon scores on a right straight against Jassim Meshall of Iraq moments before the referee halted the fight last night in the 22nd Asian Boxing Championships Olympic qualifier in Puerto Princesa City. ROMY HOMILLADA

Veteran Romeo Brin, forced to replace an ailing Mark Jason Melligen, and light heavyweight Maraon Goles are still fighting at presstime in the 30-bout inaugural program.

Brin, 30, a two-time Olympian and Asian Gamer, was plucked out of retirement after Melligen experienced recurring fever in the past four days.

"He was interested and he's got the experience," said Philippine team head coach George Caliwan. "We let him spar against his former teammates and he proved his worth."

A short opening ceremony, graced by tournament co-chairs Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn and Palawan Gov. Joel T. Reyes, preceded the ring action.

Also in attendance were Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, and Prof. Anwar Chwodry, longtime president of the Amateur International Boxing Association.

The six remaining Filipino bets, headed by light flyweight Harry Tañamor, are slated to see action today as competition heats up in the 30-nation event serving as a qualifier to the Athens Olympics.

Dindo upholds Pumaren tradition in the UE Warriors

By Dennis Eroa

FROM waterboy to head coach of a team rich in winning tradition.

Dindo Pumaren, whose father Filomeno and elder brother Derek jumpstarted their career at University of the East, upheld a family tradition by confirming yesterday his appointment as coach of the Red Warriors in the UAAP's 67th season.

"I'm in and I'm deeply honored," the 38-year-old Pumaren, a 14-year PBA veteran, told the INQUIRER in an exclusive interview.

Pumaren recalled the days when he used to serve as waterboy for UE, which shares the honor with Santo Tomas as the league's winningest basketball team with 18 titles.

Pilo gave the Red Warriors numerous titles first as a player and then as coach, and Dindo, then a grade schooler, savored the triumphs with his father at UE's helm.

Derek was also an ex-Warrior before

DINDO/A18

GMs quit over rich Torre-Paragua duel

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TORRE PARAGUA ANTONIO VILLAMAYOR

GRANDMASTERS Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor resigned yesterday as officials of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines in protest against the planned P1.5-million showdown between Eugene Torre and Mark Paragua.

"They are not the country's top two players. Mark is not even a GM yet," said Antonio of the Torre-Paragua duel scheduled to be held sometime in March.

The two GMs said the NCFP had its priorities wrong in approving the one-on-one contest, saying the prize money for the showdown is enough to stage the Philippine Open championship or five major tournaments that could involve hundreds of players nationwide.

Antonio and Villamayor said they asked NCFP president Mat Defensor about the showdown but the latter said he knew nothing about it.

"This shows the disorganized management of the NCFP under (secretary general) Sammy Estimo," they said.

Estimo was earlier quoted as having called the Torre-Paragua duel a big step in boosting the popularity of the sport.

"Considering the status of both players, their duel would certainly boost the stock of local chess," Estimo said.

This squabble over money recalled a similar row in the last SEAG when the men's chess team led by Paragua, Antonio, Torre and Villamayor nearly failed to compete as they quarreled whether to share or not the monetary incentive they were hoping to get from the Philippine Sports Commission in their sport.

Because of the dispute, Paragua threatened not to play, but he was persuaded by officials to change his mind. He went on to become the most bemedaled RP athlete in the SEAG, winning the individual rapid gold medal and sharing with Torre, Antonio and Villamayor the country's two team titles in rapid and standard plays.

Torre, who also picked up another bronze in the individual standard division, heads the NCFP with Antonio and Villamayor serving as members of the board and the players' council.

Incidentally the 41-year-old Antonio defeated Torre in a similar showdown dubbed as Centennial Duel in 1998.

The Torre-Paragua match is touted to be a battle "between a chess legend and the brightest chess player in the country," with the winner getting P1 million and the loser P500,000.

Although an international master, Paragua, 19, is ranked the top Filipino in the recent Fide ratings with an ELO of 2529. Antonio is second with 2523 and Torre third with 2521.

Antonio and Villamayor said they also supported women players Joy Lomibao and Christine Mariano in their complaints against Estimo's administration. *With a report from NM Marlon Bernardino*

Carter con-Vince-ing as Raptors rap Blazers

TORONTO—Vince Carter had 20 points, seven assists, six rebounds and four blocks to lead the Toronto Raptors to an 83-72 win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Sunday.

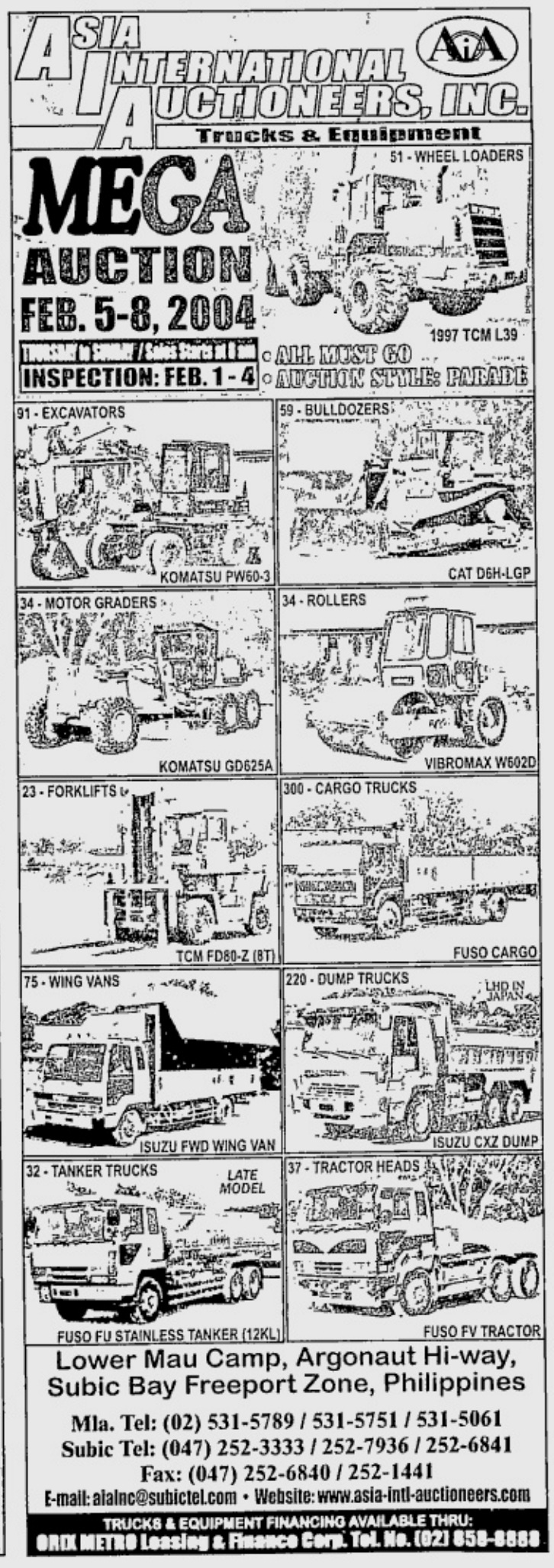
"That's what we expect of Vince," Toronto coach Kevin O'Neill said. "I thought he did a great job of imposing his will on their defense and really making big-time plays."

Jalen Rose had 17 points, and Donyell Marshall added 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Raptors, who rebounded from Friday's loss to the short-handed Los Angeles Clippers.

Carter had just 12 points in the loss, and Marshall had just two.

"I came to play from the start," Carter said.

Other NBA results: Celtics 97, Rockets 93; Kings 117, Nuggets 106; Grizzlies 108, Clippers 107, OT. AP



RP Ladies Open tees off tomorrow

By Jong Arcano

WITH just a few names to choose from as the possible winner, the Philippine Ladies Open golf championship starting tomorrow at Manila Golf Club puts into focus the unhappy state of the country's women's talent pool.

Conspicuously absent from the roster is Heidi Chua, back-to-back winner from 2002, who has already turned pro and is busy campaigning in Taiwan.

Carmelette Villaroman, the 1993 champion, and Lina de Guzman are the lowest handicappers in the field with similar 1-handicaps. But neither of them has made a serious bid for the title in recent years.

Their toughest challenge should come from the jungolf ranks. And there are not too many of them, either.

Jayvie Agojo, the girl who almost won the crown last year, is admittedly rusty after staying away from the game for almost three months, while Remijin Camping needs to put in a more consistent effort despite training long and hard.

Chua beat Agojo in a sudden-death playoff for last year's crown.

Of the 21 foreign entries, Frances Bondad of Australia looms as the biggest threat with her handicap of 2.

The organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines said 88 players are vying this year.

Ushering in the tourney is the opening ceremonies today, with LPGA campaigner Jenny Rosales, National Golf Association of the Philippines president Rod Feliciano, WGAP president Gina Tuason and Chito Recto of the host club hitting the ceremonial drives.

Tournament sponsors include the Pagcor, PCSO, the First Gentleman Foundation, Golden Donuts, Rep. Gilberto Duavit, Equitable-PCI Bank, ICTSI, Inquirer Golf Monthly, Slazenger, Nike Park and Crucible Gallery.

RP's Rubillar fights Ortiz for right to challenge Arce

By Rey Danseco, *Contributor*

ANOTHER Filipino will get a crack at the World Boxing Council junior flyweight crown that reigning champ Jorge Arce of Mexico superbly defended against the Philippines' Joma Gamboa on Saturday.

But Juanito Rubillar, one of two men World Boxing Council president Jose Sulaiman wants Arce to face next, needs to first hurdle Eric Ortiz of Mexico in Manila.

Rubillar, the former WBC International junior fly king and ward of the Gabriel "Bebot" Elorde Stable, has been lined up to fight WBC Central American lightfly titleholder Ortiz to determine Arce's mandatory challenger.

"The final elimination bout between Rubillar and Ortiz must be done, with the winner becoming the official challenger to the winner of Arce-Gamboa (fight)," said Sulaiman in an email message to Elorde dated Jan. 2.

Elorde said the Rubillar-Ortiz bout is tentatively set in March.

"*Nanalo tayo sa* bid," said Elorde.

RP five aces prime choices in PBA draft

By June Navarro

PUREFOODS, armed with the second overall pick in the coming rookie draft, is torn between UAAP stars James Yap of University of the East and Ateneo's Rich Alvarez.

But it would be more confusing, Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio explained, if Shell spoils the party and exercises the top pick on anybody outside the two collegiate standouts.

The 6-foot-4 Alvarez, back-to-back UAAP MVP in 2000 and 2001, and the hot-shooting Yap, who also won the MVP award last year, held spellbound the crowd, including Gregorio and his coaching staff, during the rookie camp in Quezon City Sunday.

"If Shell picks Alvarez, we might grab Yap or vice-versa. What could be confusing is the possibility of Shell selecting another player besides Yap and Alvarez. We will have to rack our brains before letting the other go," Gregorio told the INQUIRER.

Also on Gregorio's wish list is the 6-foot-6 Marc Pingris, who also wowed camp attendees with his jumping and rebounding ability.

"Anything can still happen from now until Sunday. We are thoroughly evaluating our options on these three players (Alvarez, Yap and Pingris)," said Gregorio.

Shell's American coach John Moran didn't hide the fact that the Turbochargers are in dire need of a big man, but Perry Ronquillo's replacement stressed that they are also exploring options in other positions.

Gregorio, who steered the TJ Hotdogs to the 2002 Governors Cup title, has also expressed interest on some of the rookie prospects.

"I'm totally impressed with the draftees. I can't remember seeing a pool as deep as this one. It's getting more confusing by the day as we evaluate the performances of the rookies," said Gregorio.

The FedEx Express, drafting third and fourth overall in the draft scheduled on Jan. 16 at the Glorietta Activity Center, have locked their sights on the members of the national team which captured the gold in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games last year.

FedEx team manager Lito Alvarez said Ervin Sotto, Pingris, Alvarez and even national team swingman Gary David could fill in their three first-round picks (third, fourth and ninth overall).

Selecting fifth in the first round, Alaska hopes to get a big man who will be left untapped by Shell, Purefoods and FedEx. Alaska team manager Joaqui Trillo said they need a power forward or a center.

Meanwhile, Willie Miller, the 2002 league MVP traded by Red Bull to Talk 'N Text, agreed yesterday to the maximum contract of P11 million for three years offered by the Phone Pals.

PEPPERY national team mainstay James Yap (left) is being eyed by Purefoods, Shell and at least three other PBA teams. AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

Dindo upholds . . . From page A17

coaching UE.

But Dindo took another path, first seeing action for the San Beda Red Cubs before moving on to La Salle in the UAAP. "This is a new challenge for me," Dindo. said.

While starters James Yap, Arnold Booker, Olan Omiping and Paul Artadi will no longer play for UE this season, Dindo isn't worried.

UE's last title was in 1985 during the time of Allan Caidic, Jerry Codiñera, George Ella, Godofredo Lim Uy, Aaron Torres and Boyzie Zamar, the man Dindo replaced.

Elder brother Franz, who gave La Salle a "four-peat" from 1998-2001, is still with the Archers and unless politics intervenes, two Pumarens would be coaching in the league.

Pingris out as Welcoat faces B'Star

WELCOAT Paints will miss Marc Pingris when it goes up against Blu Star at 1:30 p.m. today while Sunkist-UST hopes to extend its winning ways against Fash Liquid Detergent at the start of the PBL Platinum Cup semifinals at the Pasig Sports Center.

The 6-foot-6 Pingris, one of the seven Paint Masters eyeing stints in the pro league, was slapped a one-game suspension and a P2,000 fine after confronting a game official during their game against Montaña last Saturday.

At 9-3, Welcoat has bright prospects of reaching the finals. However, as an incentive, a team which earns four victories in the double round semis gets a playoff stint for the last finals berth.

"It's going to be a major adjustment but I'm confident the boys can handle it," said Welcoat coach Leo Austria of Pingris' absence.

Meanwhile, the Tigers try to stretch their winning streak to four when they take on the Detergent Kings at 3:30 p.m. The two teams split their matches in the eliminatioins. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Huge cast for Roligon derby

THE ANTICIPATED huge cast in Roligon Mega Cockpit's 14th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby on Jan. 31, Feb. 3, 5, 7, 10 and 12 is fast shaping up. Reservations for cockhouses are already being made for the second day of eliminations on Feb. 3, including those for the entries of Tony Lasala, Maj. Bobby Doromal, T. Gonzales, Edwin Ramos and the LA 939 Group. Signing up for Feb. 5 are J. Leonidas, Noel Zoleta, ASF Listana and Bebot Yu. The first batch of participants seeing action on Jan. 31 is almost complete, among them Oca Bolante (two entries), Gov. Colet, Boy Marzo, Bebot Uy of Davao (three entries), Luis Villa of Quezon province, Yando Bayot and Rey Briones who topped the 273-entry Apordabol Derby recently. For an entry fee of P11,000, top promoter Rolly Ligon said the guaranteed prize is P3.6 million, regardless of the actual number of entries. Cockpit general manager Danny Ty urged entries to make an early reservation. For inquiries, call 833-2275 at 833-1638.

Patriotism is dead

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I ADMIRE the guts of Chito Narvasa. He is so pro-Filipino he'd maybe offer his life in stopping an alien trying to steal a coaching job that is supposed to be reserved for a Filipino. Chito being president of the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines (BCAP) means he's first on the line when it comes to defending the Filipino coach's inherent right to coach a basketball team in his own country. Bravo!

The truth is, there's really no big deal in the way Chito acts and thinks. Every Filipino worth his salt should be like Chito: Defend the Filipino's foothold on everything Filipino.

What makes Chito's position stand out is because it comes, as it always does, amid the seeming callousness of virtually everybody in dealing with something that has something to do with patriotism. Times indeed have changed in that not everybody today gives a hoot anymore whether or not a Filipino is respected in his own land of birth.

In many parts of the world, the laws of the land always take precedence over convenience. Their leaders take their laws to heart, enforce them with near-iron fist policy.

My son, Dayong, was in Australia for three months last year. First he attended a coaching seminar/convention in Melbourne. Second he moved to Brisbane for another series of coaching exposure, plus prospective study grants to further augment his Masters degree in Fine Arts (Painting) that he had earned at UP-Diliman. Along the way, he linked up with Joey Wright, the one-time PBA import and teammate of now-Ginebra coach Allan Caidic at Great Taste.

Joey Wright now coaches the Brisbane Bullets. Dayong, an assistant coach of three-time PBL champion Shark Energy Drink and 2003 NCAA champion Letran, would soon find himself sitting at times on the Bullets bench alongside Joey Wright. Not long after, Joey Wright fell for Dayong and wanted my son, who was also the scout coach of Ateneo when Ateneo won the 2002 UAAP title, to be one of his assistant coaches.

Dayong was flattered, of course. But, alas, he could not get the job. Like the Americans, the Australians are that strict in enforcing their laws. Dayong's entry would deprive an Australian of the job Coach Wright would want him to have. The only way Dayong could have gotten the job was for him to have had a coaching stint in the NBA—an experience that an Australian has yet to acquire. Not even Dayong's coaching seminars at Stanford in San Francisco and UCLA in Los Angeles in 2002 were of any help.

Jeff Van Groningen, the Brisbane Bullets team owner, would have been also too willing to take in Dayong but for the strict Australian laws on hiring foreigners.

I can only salute both Groningen and Wright for their adherence to law. They ought to be placed on a pedestal for being role models in patriotism.

Dayong's back and now lives with his family in GenSan where he might soon reopen his summer basketball camp—that is, if he doesn't land a coaching job again in Manila.

There is nothing more sacred than treating your citizen first at all times. What is yours is yours. How can you say you love your own when you can give what is your own's birthright to any bastard at the flick of a finger? Right is right but only when observed right.

Was it Quezon who said that he'd rather see his country run like hell by Filipinos than see his country run like heaven by Americans?

Indeed, there is no greater glory than seeing our very own running the show— even if his method of doing it doesn't seem right.

Well, what could be right to others might not be necessarily right to you. What could be wrong to others might not necessarily be wrong to you.

But definitely, what was wrong with having a Bayno, a Woolpert and soon(?) a Moran for a coach in the PBA was the fact that all three are Americans. They can be good, as was Ron Jacobs, but them being good does not mean you can trample on the laws of the land just to accommodate them here. It is not only illegal, it is also immoral. As a rule of life, the moral side is better observed than the legal side of things. One who thinks that it is best that morality takes precedence over legality, why bless his soul. That person has a heart. Like Chito Narvasa himself, a lawyer at that.

Most times, one having a heart is better than one having a mind.

MARLBORO RED RACING

Rare Ferrari stint for 5 F1 fans

JUAN Carlos Anton, Ian Magbanua, Jill Natalie "Jeena" Lopez, Rene Enrico Jimenez and Marc Peter Thomann have found a chance to make their dreams come true.

Thanks to the Marlboro Red Racing School, the five will fly to Italy, don a racing suit, strap themselves in the cockpit of the ultimate cars in racing—the Ferrari Minardi Formula One racer, not to mention an Alfa Romeo GT and a Ferrari F360 Marinello—and learn how to negotiate curves and bends like a pro.

All these they'll do at the Ferrari racing school in June in Italy, having beaten several other wannabes in the promotion Marlboro launched just recently.

"It has always been my dream as far back as I can remember to drive an F1 car. As a kid, I always looked to that as an ultimate goal, especially since I come from a racing family," said Anton.

Magbanua, who plays electronic music in his spare time, knows that cars and sounds blend perfectly.

After all, what car doesn't come with a stereo nowadays. His dream? Crank up the volume of an F1 car speaker and gunning its engine to life.

"If there's a CD player there, I'm going to slip in a disc of Chemical Brothers and just let the volume blast out. Then I'll step on it and it will be a perfect mix of speed and sound," said the 28-year-old Magbanua.

Lopez, a 33-year-old mom, is more than meets the eye. "I'm an adrenaline junkie," she gushed.

Her dream car is a Ferrari and an ad about the chance to drive one drove out every ounce of her plainness one Sunday afternoon.

"I remember, it was Sunday and my husband was reading the papers and there was this full-page spread about the promo. He said, 'Look, a Ferrari F1 car, our dream car,'" she recalled.

"I took the number that you had to text to qualify as a participant and wasted no time sending in my message," she added.

Jimenez always daydreams when driving his Lancer around the metropolis.

"I always imagine it's an Formula One car," he said. He can quit daydreaming now because he will soon get his hands on the real thing.

The five went through different team-building sessions almost similar to those that candidates seeking slots to the Marlboro Adventure Team go through.

Except this one was a lot tamer.

There was a treasure hunt around Ayala and an actual go-kart experience simulating an F1 race. They had pit-stop simulations and endurance races just to acclimatize the qualifiers to the racing conditions in a Formula One event.

The winners were announced last month at the Philtrade Center, with top Marlboro men on hand—Jasper Evangelista, Marlboro brand manager, and Bo Ekberg, marketing director of Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc.

"It was really fun," said Thomann. "The competition was just secondary. The fact that we qualified was a big bonus. But the event itself was really an experience. Now, we're going to Italy."

MARLBORO Red Racing School winners Jimenez, Magbanua, Thomann, Anton and Lopez (above) pose with a life-sized replica of the Formula One car Michael Schumacher drove to win the 2000 F1 Grand Prix. With them are Marlboro's Evangelista and Philip Morris' Ekberg. At left, Ekberg pops the bubbly with the Lucky Five.

Arcilla puts away Adiong Cup

MARAWI CITY—Top seed Johnny Arcilla beat second seed Joseph Victorino, 6-2, 6-4, to win the P200,000 Gov. Mamintal "Mike" Adiong Sr. Cup National Open Tennis Championships yesterday.

The 23-year-old Arcilla pocketed the top purse of P40,000.

Victorino later teamed with Michael Mora III to down Arcilla and Adelo Abadia, 6-4, 6-2, in the doubles finals.

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6 BUFFALO SOLDIERS
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8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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2 FILIPINAS
3 CRYING LADIES
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6 MANO PO 2
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM CITY BACOOR
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1 FILIPINAS
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
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5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
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7 CRYING LADIES
8 MALIKMATA

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3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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8 THE GRUDGE
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MANO PO 2

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7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 MALIKMATA
10 BRIDAL SHOWER

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5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
6 FANTASTICMAN
7 CRYING LADIES
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 MALIKMATA
11 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
12 FILIPINAS

SM CITY DAVAO
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4 CRYING LADIES
5 BRIDAL SHOWER
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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3 FILIPINAS
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7 RESERVED
8 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MANILA
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12 GAGAMBOY

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(088) 8583284

1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MANO PO 2
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464585

1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 MALIKMATA
3 CRYING LADIES
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

THE PODIUM CINEMA

16 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City • 638 9781 - 85

LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING
11:05 FS/11:25 MF/3:05/6:45/10:05 LFS/10:25 LMF/1:45 END

LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING
11:25 FS/11:55 MF/3:35/7:15/10:35 LMF/11:00 LMF/2:20 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8975 • LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee P100.00 - Screening time 5pm • Monday to Friday • Regular P120.00 - After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays • Reserved Seating

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THX /All Digital

1 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 11:00, 3:00, 7:00 11:00 THX
2 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 1:30, 5:40, 9:30
3 BUFFALO SOLDIER 12:05, 2:15, 4:30, 6:40, 9:00
4 THE GATHERING 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
5 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 10:15, 2:10, 6:05, 10:00
6 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 1:00, 5:00, 9:00, 12:20
7 FILIPINAS 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 CRYING LADIES 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
9 BRIDAL SHOWER 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
10 MANO PO 2 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50

MATINEE PRICE: P100 THX cinema / P75 1level cinemas
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Ermita
526-7185
536-7809 to 12

1 LOTR3 - 10:40, 2:20, 6:00, 10:00
2 CRYING LADIES - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
3 MALIKMATA - 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:50
4 THE GATHERING - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00
6 BRIDAL SHOWER - 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
7 LOTR3 - 12:00, 1:20, 5:00, 9:00

Metro East
Marcos hway
602-8193/99
682-8280

1 MALIKMATA
2 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 CRYING LADIES
6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
7 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
8 MANO PO 2

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
2 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPTAIN BARBELL
6 FILIPINAS
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 MANO PO 2

Cainta
Brgy Sto. Domingo, Ortigas Extension
240-4661

1 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
2 CRYING LADIES
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Malabon
288-0985/2575

1 CRYING LADIES
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Sta. Rosa
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(043)757-3664 312-5870

LOTR3	1	CRYING LADIES
MANO PO 2	2	HOMECOMING
MALIKMATA	3	GAGAMBOY
BRIDAL SHOWER	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

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LOTR3	1	LOTR3
CRYING LADIES	2	LOTR3
BRIDAL SHOWER	3	THE GRUDGE
CAPTAIN BARBELL	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
FILIPINAS	5	MALIKMATA
	6	CAPTAIN BARBELL

Bacolod
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Iloilo
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LOTR3	1	LOTR3
LOTR3	2	JEEPERS CREEPERS
JEEPERS CREEPERS	3	CRYING LADIES
THE GRUDGE	4	LOTR3
CRYING LADIES	5	FILIPINAS
OUT OF TIME	6	BRIDAL SHOWER

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1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 FILIPINAS
3 CRYING LADIES
4 MANO PO 2
5 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING
6 LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

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"HANGING TIME" STARTS TOMORROW!

THEATER FANTASY GREENHILLS

CINEMA 1
LOTR 3 - P13
10:50 . 2:30 . 6:15 . 10:00
Advance Selling P150

CINEMA 2
LOTR 3 - P13
11:20 . 3:05 . 6:50 . 10:40
Advance Selling P150

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MUSIC MUSEUM
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Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. Nos. 8981440-41

LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 12:45, 4:30, 8:15	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 12:00, 3:45, 7:30	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 1:30, 5:15, 9:00
LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 2:15, 6:00, 9:45	BUFFALO SOLDIERS R13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING PG13 3:00, 6:45, 10:30

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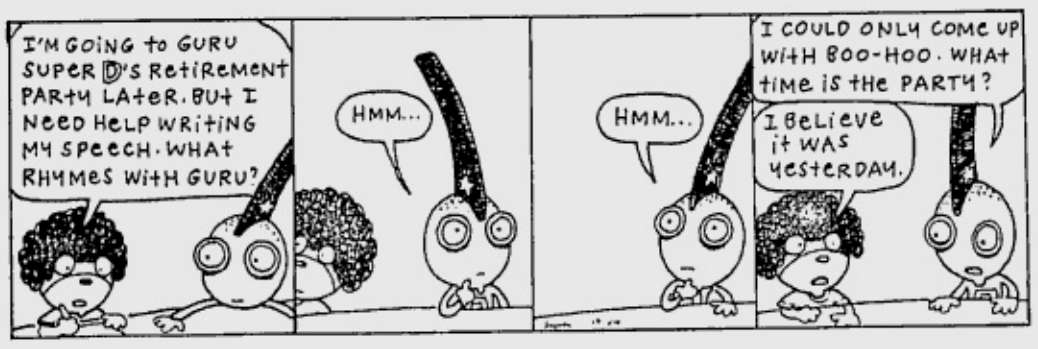
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO



DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Status matters to you. You value your reputation. You want to achieve prominence to be secure and to get respect. Because of this, you are extremely goal-oriented. You are fun-loving and adventurous. You enjoy beautiful surroundings. The year ahead focuses on your closest partnerships and relationships.
Birthdate of: Orlando Bloom, actor; Frances Sternhagen, actress; Julia Louis-Dreyfus, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be prepared for a few surprises from the big boss. New ways of doing things might be handed down from on high, creating a little excitement.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're making new discoveries and encountering new kinds of people lately. All this probably puts a new spin on how you think. That's good.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's lucky that you're naturally flexible, because new things keep coming at you from different directions. Fortunately, you can style-flex with the best of them.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to tackle old problems you haven't been able to solve before. Now you see things in a new light. (The more things change, the more they stay the same.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Unexpected resources, benefits, favors and assistance from others can make a big difference in your job right now. Accept the help that is offered to you. You earned it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): New love could walk into your life any day now. This is not a guarantee, but it is a strong possibility. It could be romantic, platonic or even the love of a new puppy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Give up trying to keep to your normal schedule. Things are too much up in the air. The best way to approach life right now is to be flexible and on your toes—ready to jump either way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): New acquaintances bring variety and spice into your life right now. These new faces generate a sense of excitement and increased interest for you. (It might test your spontaneity.)

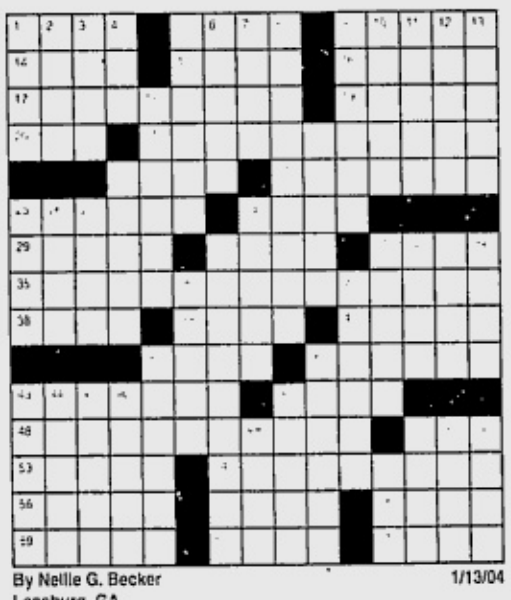
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Unexpected ways to boost your earnings or make more money in some fashion could occur to you now. You're full of bright ideas because you have the courage to think outside the box.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to break free from your usual routine now. That's just fine. Do something that is different to satisfy your sense of exploration and curiosity.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A nervous energy lends a mild excitement to everything that you do right now. It's as if you're waiting for something to happen.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might make friends with someone unusual now. It's certainly possible for characters to cross your path. Stay tuned.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Nellie G. Becker
Leesburg, GA
1/13/04

ACROSS
1 Actress Pinkett
5 Space-saving abbr.
9 Sacrifice plays
14 Patron saint of Norway
15 Ward of "Sisters"
16 For the birds?
17 Squatter's land
19 Okra stew
20 Born in Nice
21 Wimbledon woe
23 Ben and Bobby
24 Cream-filled pastries
25 Takes place subsequently
28 Fire-sale caveat
29 Climbing vine
30 Verne's captain
31 Lose footing
35 Fist as food?
38 Bargain period
39 God of the sun
40 Bill __ and the Comets
41 Shawl or cloak
42 Locating devices
43 Cheap cigars
47 Hole-makers
48 Bend in a swamp?
50 Governor Bush
53 Liquid part of fat
54 Sewing machine man
56 Physicist Enrico
57 Examine
58 Perused
59 Set up an innocent party
60 Goes steady with
61 "Auld Lang __"

DOWN
1 Mr. Doe
2 Shaving-cream additive
3 Knight's lady
4 5th or Park
5 Organic compounds
6 Soon-to-be adults
7 Shepard or Greenspan
8 Casanova
9 Deli rolls
10 Palate dangler
11 Saintly haloes
12 Filer's drum
13 Phoebe and Hank
18 Run naked
22 Descendent
23 Light weight
25 Part of BPOE
26 Singer Simone
27 Writer Bellow
28 Ancient fabulist
30 Foot of the plus column
31 Graceful birds
32 Singer McCann
33 Champagne bucket
34 Part of P.E.
36 Roman gods
37 Wild Asian dogs
41 Wuss
42 Perspires
43 Treat with derision
44 "Ladder of Years" novelist
45 "The Girl of the Golden West," e.g.
46 Brothers of fairy tales
47 Licorice flavor
49 Swiss painter Paul
50 Kangaroo kid
51 McGregor of "Trainspotting"
52 Anglo-Saxon theologian
55 "48 __"

Monday's Puzzle Solved

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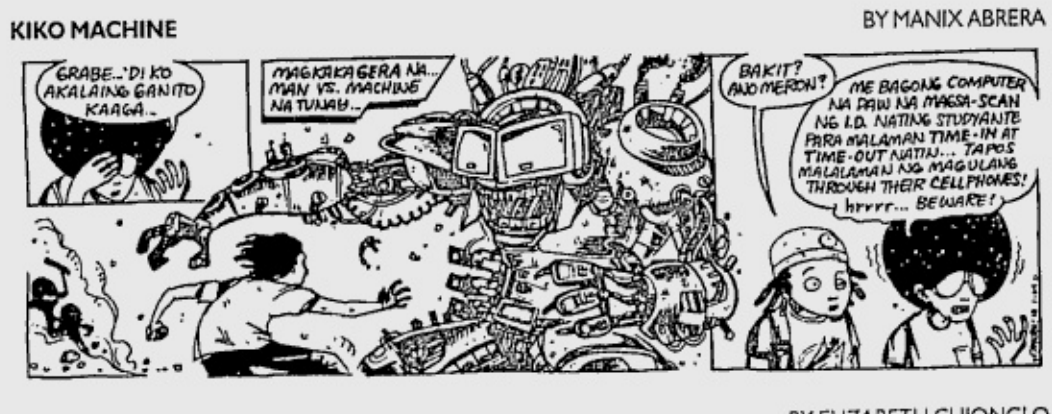
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

Keith Martin amazed by local talents

I HAD an enchanted evening watching **Keith Martin**'s concert. (*Muchas gracias* to the ever reliable **Calvin Neria** for the tickets, and kudos to Mossimo for mounting such a terrific show in celebration of its fifth anniversary.)

Keith's smash hit "Because of You" is one song I wish to be sung if and when I take the plunge again. I'm the queen of wishful thinking.

Music buffs like me kid around that Keith's song might as well be the English version of our immortal love song "Dahil Sa Yo."

I was blown away by Keith's soulful singing as well as by the awesome performance of all our local artists who were special guests at the concert. **Medwin Marfil** of True Faith, **Paolo Santos**, **Luke Mejares**, **Jimmy Bondoc**, **Sarah Geronimo**, Pido with Take One, Akafellas, **Jay R**, Silk, Passage, **Kitchie Nadal**, **Rebekah** and the Philharmonic Orchestra—all agreed to perform gratis et amore for the benefit of the Unang Hakbang sa Kinabukasan project of the GMA Kapuso Foundation. The project seeks to reconstruct school buildings and build mini-libraries for children in areas torn apart by conflict.

Even Keith was amazed at how many great singers we have. It made me feel proud watching our very own OPM artists perform with Keith. They were all at par with the international crooner.

It was the first time I heard Rebekah sing and I was really impressed with her duet with Keith. They sang "The Closer I Get to You." She's more than qualified to be the next **Regine Velasquez**.

Luke, Jay R and Keith's rendition of "I'll Make Love to You" sounded even better than the original Boyz II Men version. Paolo showed once again why he is Mr. Acoustic. And of course I was delighted to watch my number one fave Medwin do his thing. Even without the rest of True Faith, Med stood out.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

People first heard of Keith when his song "I'll Never Find Someone Like You" was included in the "Bad Boys II" soundtrack. But it was "Because of You" that made him a household name in the country. His first album, "It's Long Overdue," was actually released in 1995 but it found its way to the Philippines only recently.

Gary V just warming up

I ALWAYS like to say that when I'm "bad trip," I go on a music trip. So the day after Keith's concert, I joined my "fairy godsister" **Vicki Belo** at **Gary V**'s show at Aliw Theater. It was Gary's post-celebration of his 20 years in the business.

Mr. Pure Energy has not lost his magic. His classic hits still

KEITH/ A22

Araneta Center

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	BRIDAL SHOWER
Ali 2	LORD OF THE RINGS
Ali 3	LORD OF THE RINGS
Ali 4	LORD OF THE RINGS
Ali 5	CRYING LADIES
Ali 6	MANO PO 2
Ali 7	CAPTAIN BARBELL

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For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
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1	LORD OF THE RINGS 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:45
2	LORD OF THE RINGS 12:15, 4:00, 7:45, 11:30
3	LORD OF THE RINGS 1:45, 5:30, 9:15, 12:35
4	LORD OF THE RINGS 10:45, 2:30, 6:15, 10:00

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BRIDAL SHOWER
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	BRIDAL SHOWER
B	LORD OF THE RINGS
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MANO PO 2
CINEMA-2	MALIKMATA
CINEMA-3	FANTASTIC MAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CAPTAIN BARBELL
CINEMA-6	FILIPINAS
CINEMA-7	GAGAMBOY
CINEMA-8	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-12	LOTR 3: RETURN OF THE KING
CINEMA-14	CRYING LADIES
CINEMA-15	BRIDAL SHOWER

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 3
CINEMA-1	LORD OF THE RINGS 3
CINEMA-2	FILIPINAS
CINEMA-4	MALIKMATA

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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AYALA CINEMAS
PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
2 BRIDAL SHOWER	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	M. BUTTERFLY Jan. 9, 10 & 11	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
4 CRYING LADIES	4 BUFFALO SOLDIER		4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3
	5 THE GATHERING		5 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3	5 BRIDAL SHOWER
	6 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			
	7 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 3			

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5 BUFFALO SOLDIER
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
8 CRYING LADIES
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL

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2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

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1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 CRYING LADIES

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1 GAGAMBOY
2 MANO PO-2
3 CAPT. BARBEL
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 BRIDAL SHOWER

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2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 GAGAMBOY
6 CRYING LADIES

Mstar
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(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004

1 CRYING LADIES
2 GAGAMBOY

PREMIERE CINEMA
(Makati City) tel 892.2503 IMAX THX

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
2 CRYING LADYS

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 MANO PO-2
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

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6 BRIDAL SHOWER
7 CRYING LADIES
8 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
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2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 MALIKMATA
6 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
7 GAGAMBOY
8 CRYING LADIES
9 CAPT. BARBEL

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1 GAGAMBOY
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 MANO PO-2

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 MANO PO-2
5 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

Universal
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1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
Lords BRIDAL SHOWER

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

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2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 MANO PO-2
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

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SUPER CINERAMA
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1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY
5 MANO PO-2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 MANO PO-2
2 FANTASTIC MAN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
MALL CINEPLEX 7

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
5 CRYING LADIES
6 MANO PO-2
7 CAPTAIN BARBELL
8
9

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

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2 CRYING LADIES
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CAPT. BARBEL

Cine Nepo
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1 CRYING LADIES
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 MANO PO-2
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
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1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 BRIDAL SHOWER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 MANO PO-2
4 FANTASTIC MAN

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1 GAGAMBOY
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 CRYING LADIES

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 CRYING LADIES
2 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
3 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
4 MALIKMATA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel)

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 MALIKMATA
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
2 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPT. BARBEL

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
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2 CRYING LADIES

Olivarez Los Baños
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2 CRYING LADIES
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Cabuyao
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2 GAGAMBOY
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Beyond Willie Revillame

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THESE days, people are talking about **Willie Revillame**—how he never seems to learn his lesson, how he's blown a very good career on noontime TV, and how, in his desire to make viewers laugh, he didn't know when and where to stop.

"Three strikes, you're out," is how some people put it in baseballspeak.

For his part, Willie avers that his latest lapse was "a slip of the tongue."

He has apologized to the MTRCB, and insists that ABS-CBN didn't fire him, he resigned from "Magandang Tanghali, Bayan" because he didn't want to bring everybody else on the show down with him.

Self-portrait of the serial violator and recidivist as sacrificial lamb? Whatever.

Quite a lot of people are currently "down" on Revillame, but we don't want to join the lynch mob because we think fallen folks should be encouraged to get up again, not get kicked in the butt.

Of course, they have to really appreciate and own up to the gravity of their offense, not excuse it away by describing it as a "slip of the tongue."

Has Willie truly appreciated the seriousness of his lapse? Has he finally understood that many children are watching TV during the daytime hours, so their vulnerable sensibilities have to be protected from sexy talk and images that are too mature for them to properly handle?

Does he now accept the fact that TV people are invited guests in viewers' homes, so they should respect the ethical and behavioral standards of those homes?

If so, great. If not, more mistakes may have to be committed, and more sanctions imposed, for the all-important lessons to be definitely and definitively learned.

Our point is that the sanctions shouldn't be imposed on Revillame alone. The worst denouement to this tacky teledrama is for people to punish him, and think that the problem has been solved.

Revillame is only a symptom of a more general malaise that has stricken some other local TV people, both on-camera and off. This illness has led to the lowering of program standards, the "tabloidization" of local television, and the deplorable use of late-night, adult TV gambits on the daytime, "GP" time slot.

To be truly "cured," local TV should refrain from guesting *bomba* stars on noontime TV shows, stop showing female dancers in skimpy wear, put an end to double-entendre and sexist patter, stop exploiting women and embarrassing contestants, shift its focus from gossip, scandal and freaks, and basically respect the sensibilities of viewers, instead of "shocking" them into avid attention.

As you can see, these are many things wrong with daytime TV that go beyond Willie Revillame. So, let's not dump everything on his head and run him out of the tube. There are many more guilty people out there, so urge or pressure them to shape up as well.

The clean-up drive has only just begun. And it should involve us viewers as well. We can't heap all of the blame on the TV people—because, if we didn't patronize sleazy shows, they wouldn't prosper as much as they have.

Parents should stop using the TV set as a convenient and inexpensive electronic *yaya* for their impressionable young children, and play a more active role in supervising and regulating their viewing preferences.

The ultimate culprit isn't a single TV host, but channels *and* viewers who don't fully appreciate the power that television can exert, for good—and for bad.

'Stuck on You'

OUTRAGEOUS comedy and light drama are joined at the hip in the unusual new film, "Stuck on You," where **Matt Damon** and **Greg Kinnear** play conjoined twins.

The sibling theme is reinforced by the fact that the movie is directed by **Bobby** and **Peter Farrelly**, who have directed so many movies together that people perceive them to be (cinematically) conjoined as well!

In "Stuck on You," the twin brothers, Bob and Walt Tenor, have a very strong bond that's severely tested when Walt decides to go to Hollywood to pursue his longtime dream of becoming an actor.

In Hollywood, they meet Walt's favorite actress, **Meryl Streep**, and bump into **Cher**!

The movie's local run begins on Jan. 28.

Lea's 'Best'

LEA Salonga's biggest hits are in her latest musical compilation, "100%: Lea Gives Her Best," released by BMG Records Pilipinas and Cream Silk conditioners.

Cuts include "The Journey," "We Could be in Love" (duet with Brad Kane), "Even If," "Friend of Mine," "I Remember the Boy," "Fallin'," "I Still Believe in Love," "Can We Just Stop and Talk Awhile" and "I Think I'm in Love."

Keith Martin amazed . . .

From page A24

sound as good as ever but he added some twists to them.

Gary gamely mingled with his fans while singing and he didn't mind it a bit that they were all over him. He even posed for pictures with them and his voice did not falter a bit as they tugged at him.

The audience lapped up his "voice synthesizer antics" and his "Mr. Suave" & "Otso-otso" numbers.

It was heartwarming to see his talented kids **Paolo, Kiana** and **Gabriel** ham it up with Gary on stage. His acoustic number on k-hon with Gabriel and their dance grooves wowed everybody. Gab is truly his dad's son.

I was moved to tears when Gary paid tribute to his mom, who had flown in from the US, with matching video footage of his younger years. It reminded me of my mom and how Gary took time to pray over her at the ICU and sing at her requiem Mass.

Now that I think about it, it must have been because of divine intervention that my mom and Gary have the same birthday. They have always had some kind of cosmic link.

The audience did not want to let him go so he did two encore numbers. It was almost midnight but the crowd kept clamoring for more.

By all indications, 2004 will be Gary V's year. Seeing how all-out Gary's performance was that night makes it seem like 20 years was just a warm-up for him.

Waiting for Vandolph

I'M SADDENED to hear that **Vandolph** no longer finds time to check on his love child, my *hijada* **Gabie Avante**, 3 years old. After he signed the birth certificate, he visited Gabie about six times but that's about it.

Tita **Bing**, Gabie's funky granny, told me that they have tried to get in touch with him so that he would visit or call, but all their efforts were in vain. They are not after financial support because they can raise the baby on their own, they said. They just wish that Gabie would grow up close to her dad.

For a while, I was happy that Vandolph finally came to his senses and decided to acknowledge Gabie's existence after his near-fatal accident. He had told me, "Maybe I'm still alive because I have an obligation to be a dad to Gabie." But it seems he has not learned his lesson yet because after a few months, he rammed his other car into a tree on his way home from a drinking spree. He claimed it was his driver's fault, but my reliable source said Vandolph was driving.

Slowly he has recovered from the demise of his girlfriend **Ishi**. Now Vandolph is probably too busy with his girlfriend, dancer **Jenny**, that it has slipped his mind that he has a child who needs his time and attention even once in a blue moon.

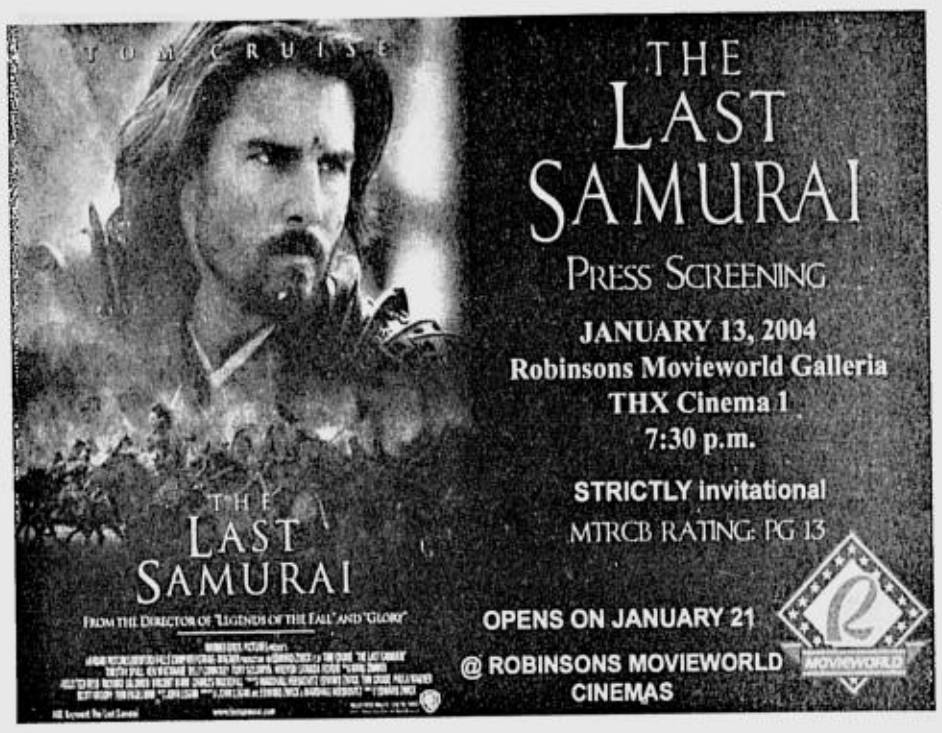
For feedback, e-mail friends_el-pueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

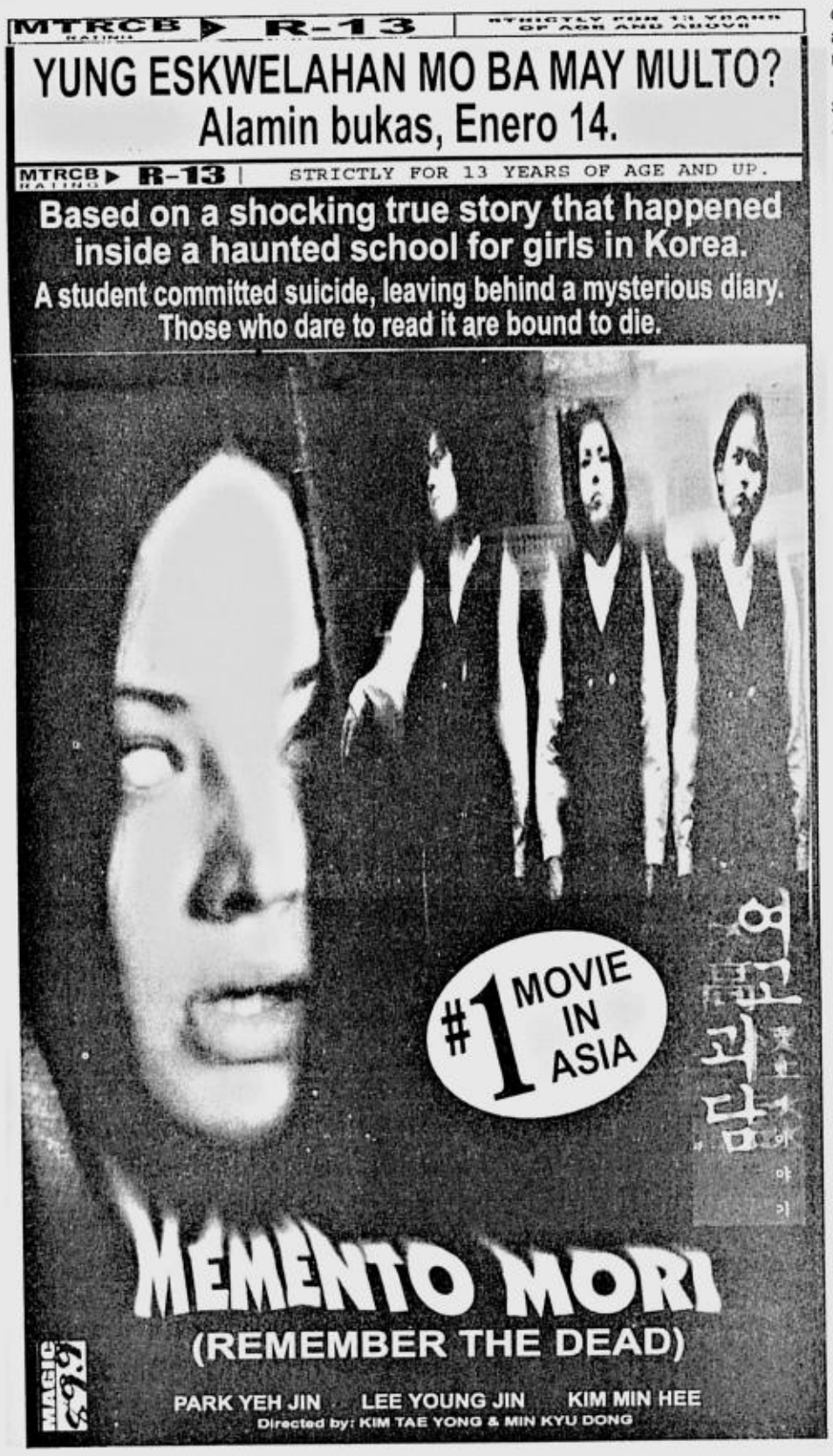
Ruffa gets a Ricky...

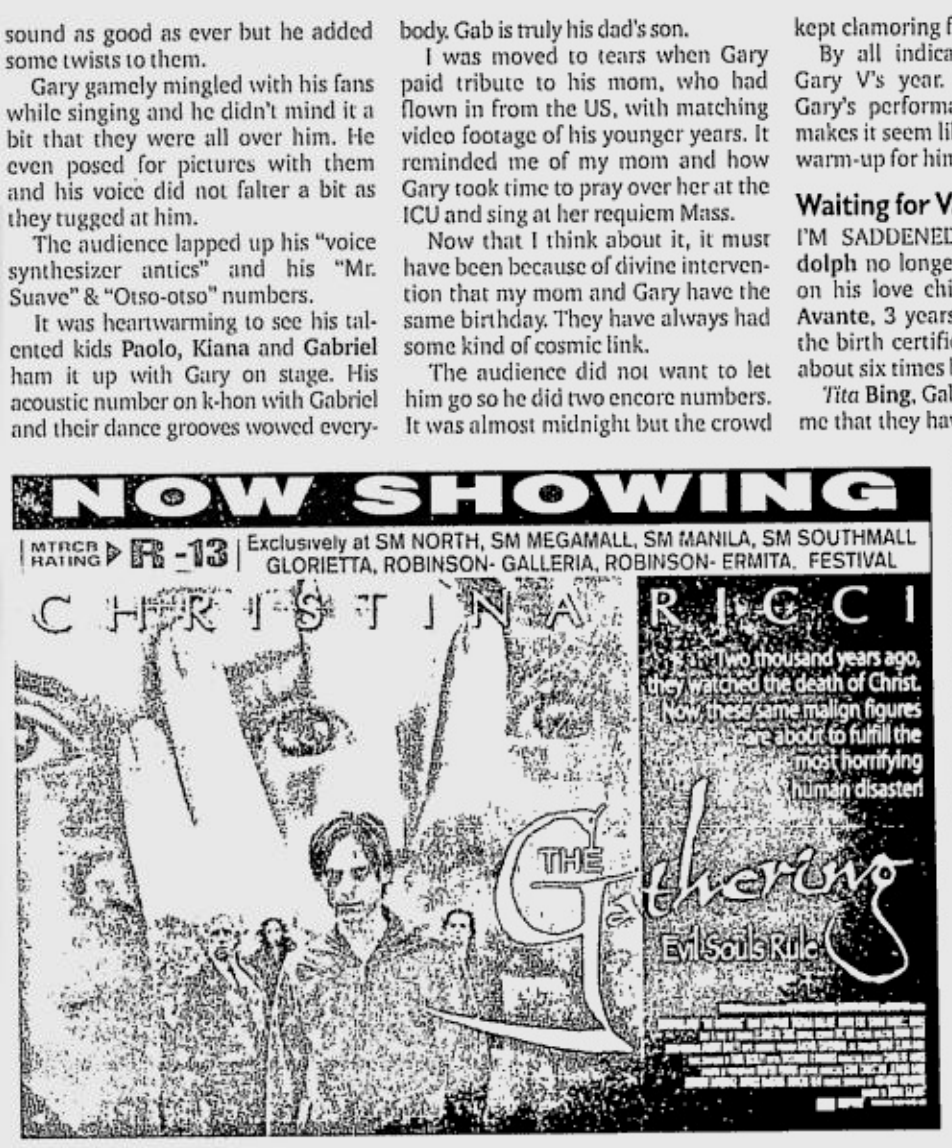
From page A24

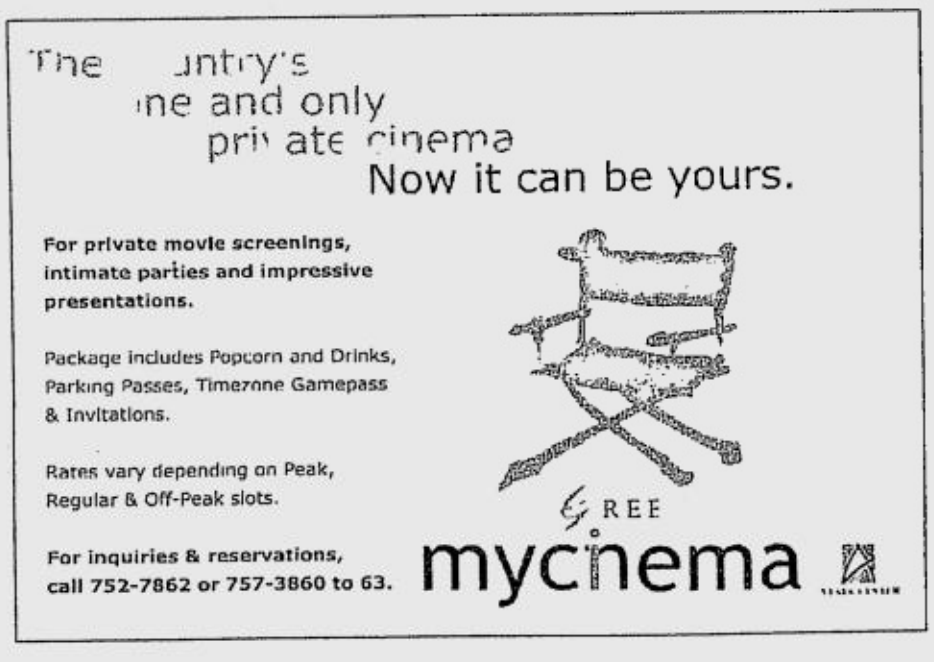
weight, they stop visiting the hairdresser, they don't buy new clothes because they'd rather buy stuff for the kids.

"But it's important for women to always look beautiful, not just for their husbands but for themselves, like what Ruffa does," he adds.









CHRISTINE JACOB-SANDEJAS

Relaying Her Winning Strokes

Christine created ripples of athletic prowess the moment her father introduced her to swimming. Lap after lap, these ripples reverberated. Now a celebrated athlete and a champion mom, Christine is still making great waves that continue to inspire budding athletes.

A passion passed on

A sport that began as an afternoon activity, impressed upon his children by a father simply sharing his passion, eventually became much more than just that. From father to daughter, the heart, skill, and discipline were passed on. Finally, Christine Jacob found and strongly held on to an athletic forté where she became an icon and will continue to be one for years to come.

Christine's passion for swimming, unfailing perseverance, and sheer determination are unquestionable after bagging two gold medals in the 1983 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Singapore for the 100-meter and 200-meter backstroke categories, followed by another seventeen gold medals in the next two years. And in 1984, Christine made it to the Olympics.

Christine at 13 with a winner's smile at the 1981 SEA Games in Manila

Thus, it comes as no surprise that for Christine Jacob, swimming is much more than just a sport. The glory and recognition only came second to the real triumphs that swimming had brought to her life. "The sport offered discipline, leadership, and commitment. It made me stronger and more focused," she relays. "If it wasn't for swimming, I would have had a hard time dealing with the real world."

Indeed, years of rigorous sports training has molded her into the person she is today and she recognizes the fact that her success is also largely attributed to the unconditional and unending support she received.

Raising her kids with MILO

One of Christine's biggest sources of support in her athletic endeavors was MILO, which never failed to provide her with "Olympic energy." True enough, MILO was by her side as she fulfilled her lifelong dream of becoming an Olympian. MILO has been a big part of Christine's own growing up years and she is very much aware of how it has contributed to her health as an active child and a competitive swimmer. She made sure that she started her day right with a healthy breakfast and a glass of MILO.

Strong bond. Christine and Paolo share a moment playing in the pool, a favorite mother-son pastime.

"I really just drank MILO when I was a kid," she says. "Now I give MILO to my own children." Christine takes pride in the fact that the MILO she drank everyday as a growing child is now fortified with Actigen-E, a combination of B-vitamins and essential micronutrients that help the optimal release of energy from food. With this, she can rest assured she is not only passing on to her children a great tradition of healthy and active living, but that she is also providing them with so much more than what she had received as a child – something all moms strive to do for their children.

Christine inspires through her athletic and personal legacy the same way her father fueled in her the burning desire to excel by getting her into sports. And one day, she too will be thanked by her children and by all those young swimmers who dream of becoming just like her.

Breakfast time for mother and son. Christine and Paolo toasting to a brand new day with MILO.

ADVT.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2004

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Nieveras also owe me, says trader

Says couple gave her TCT and checks that bounced

By Marinel R. Cruz

A BUSINESSWOMAN has claimed that singer Bert Nievera and his wife Carol, franchise operators of the Country Waffles chain of restaurants in the Philippines, left the country before Christmas without paying the money they borrowed from her.

The woman, who introduced herself as Leah Te of Elesnte Trading, said the Nieveras owe her P800,000. She said they told her the amount was used in the construction of Country Waffles in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

Te said the couple promised to pay her on Dec. 5, but a little less than three weeks later, the Nieveras left the country. The Nieveras are said to have left millions of pesos in unpaid debt to other people, including Bert's son Martin Nievera and Annabel Rama.

Rama earlier said the Nieveras turned over to her two Mercedes Benzes, a CRV and a Ford Expedition to pay for the jewels that Carol had bought from her. But she found out only after the Nieveras had gone that the cars were still not fully paid, Rama said.

"I met the Nieveras last August," Te said.

She said Bert first borrowed P1 million from her in August 2003. She said he told her he needed the money because the contractor of Country Waffles Alabang had duped him. "He gained my trust because he paid for that loan in cash," said Te.

Two months later, he borrowed money from her again, she said. "He wanted P600,000 but I could only come up with P500,000," she said. "Days later, he asked for P300,000 more."

She said Bert told her the money would be used for the construction of Country Waffles Alabang. "I was not convinced," she said, "because last August, he said construction at the Alabang branch was almost done."

When she asked for collateral, he gave her the transfer certificate of title, or TCT, of a parcel of land in Barangay Limao, Calauan, Laguna that was worth P1.3 million, she said.

Te sent INQUIRER Entertainment a copy of the TCT, which was registered in the name of RHC Ventures Inc.

"That was when all of their checks started bouncing," said Te. "Bert started avoiding me. He wouldn't take my calls anymore. Once, he picked up the phone but pretended he was someone else."

Te also sent to INQUIRER Entertainment copies of three checks that Carol had issued to her.

Singer Franco Laurel, an investor in the Bohol Avenue branch, said he received an e-mail from the Nieveras saying the outlet in Alabang would open last month. Only days after sending the e-mail, the couple left the country, said Laurel.

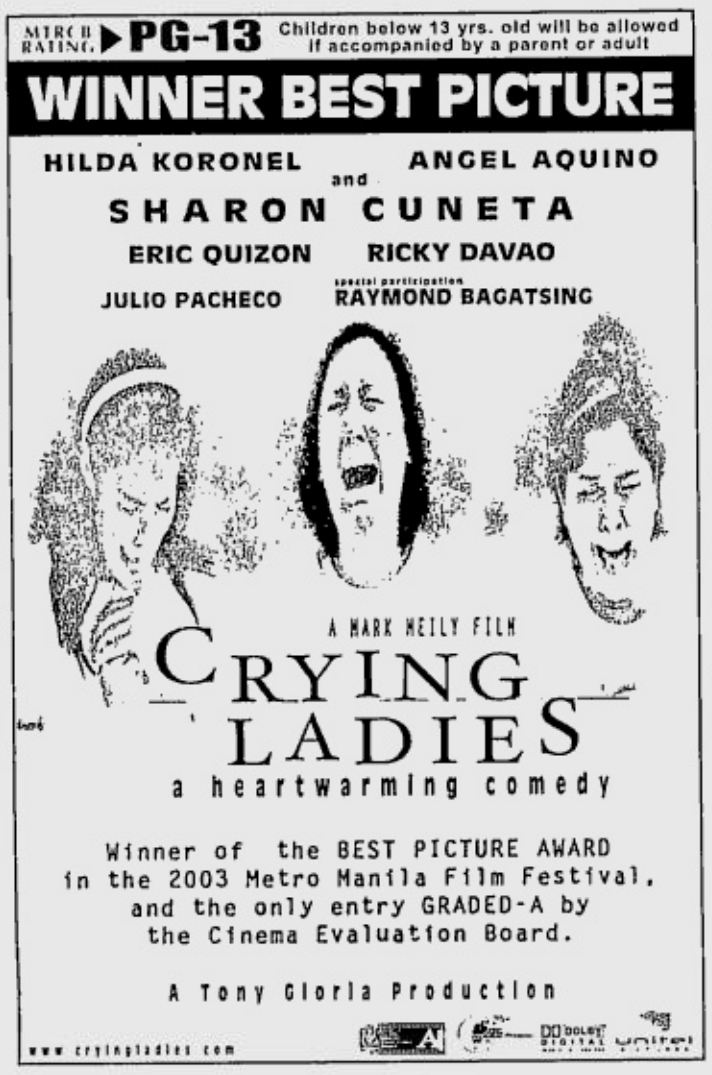
"How could Country Waffles Alabang open last December when the restaurant's façade was not even finished yet?" he said.

"The (e-mail) said Country Waffles was experiencing problems in management and that it was trying to solve them by cutting cost in ingredients," Laurel said. "It said management would hire an auditor and an accountant to fix the books."

Laurel and his wife, singer-producer Ayen Munji-Laurel, have been investors in the Bohol Avenue branch since 2001. He said Bert, who was a principal sponsor at their wedding, is a close friend of Ayen's musician father, Emy Munji.

"We invested our money in Country Waffles because we know *Tito* Bert," said Laurel, "but he abused our trust, and the trust of other investors."

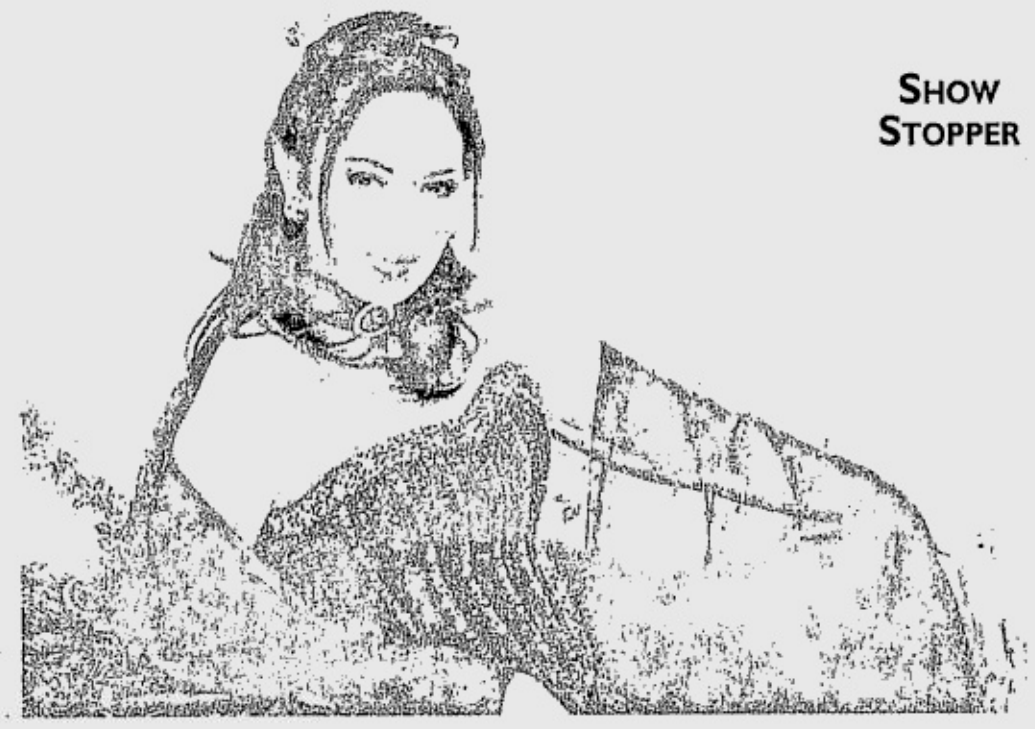
Laurel said the Nieveras never gave the investors copies of the restaurants' quarterly and annual financial reports.

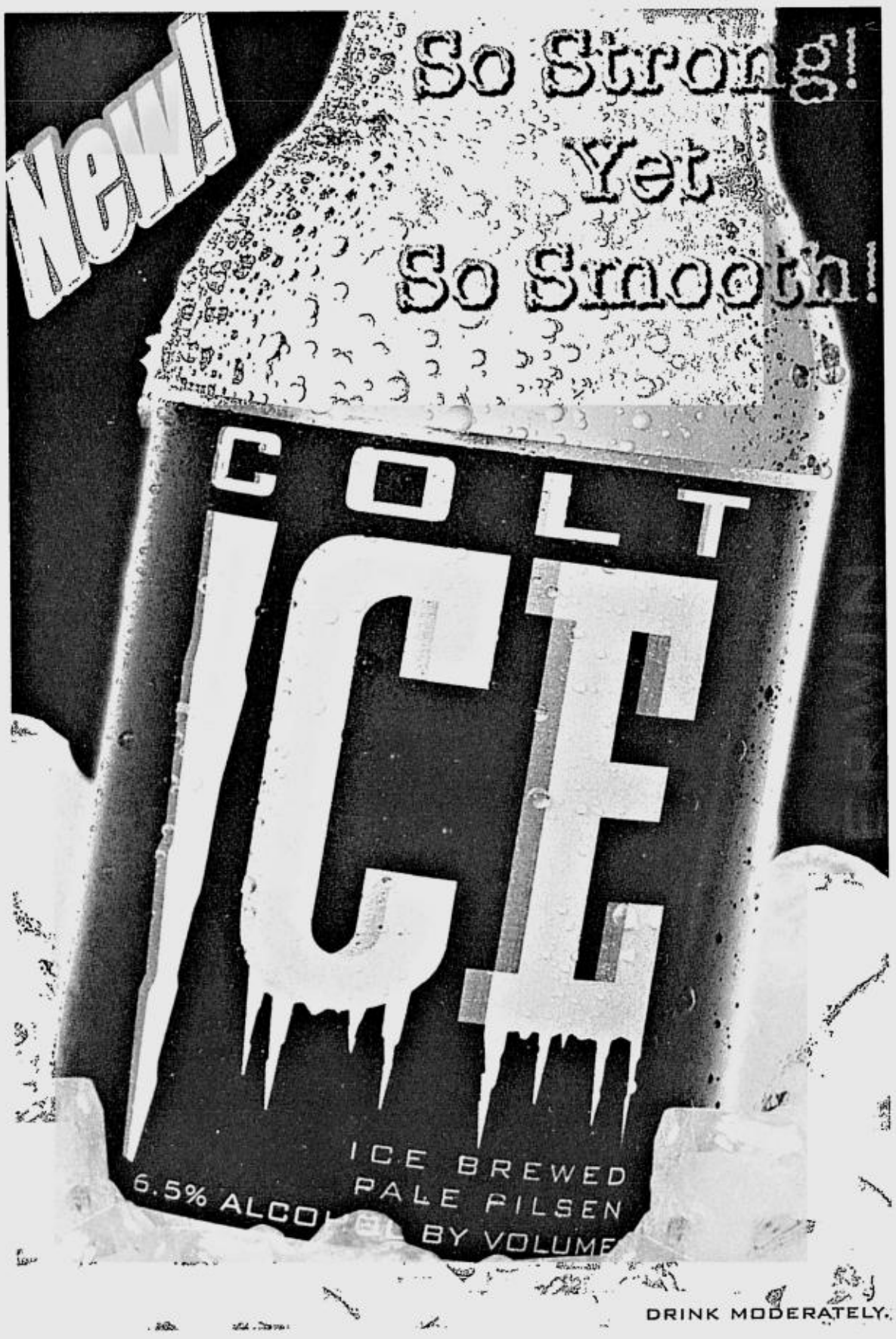


Did You Know...

Pops Fernandez cried while watching "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King," at Cinema 5 of the Alabang Town Center last Saturday night. She left the theater holding hands with a young man—not her boyfriend **Brad Turvey** but her and **Martin Nievera**'s teenage son **Ram**. The movie was showing in all five theaters of the ATC during the weekend. All screenings were sold out, including the one at 12:30 a.m., which ended at almost 4 a.m.

Show Stopper





New Colt Ice VJ in MYX!

COLT Ice (So Strong! Yet So Smooth!) made its debut in Myx last October 2003. Colt Ice is the latest product from Asia Brewery's stable of high quality beverages.

Marking the debut of Colt Ice is the appointment of Miss Joy Hendrickson , as the exclusive Colt Ice VJ on Myx, Your Choice, Your Music. Ms. Hendrickson was selected after two months of grueling screening and selection process.

Why the Asia Brewery-Myx tie-up? Mr. Jun G. Alcantara, Vice President for Marketing of Asia Brewery, sheds some light. "Colt Ice and Myx share similar target audiences. Myx music line-up cuts across various segments: male and female, the young and young at heart, the active and hyperactive, the E-generation and everyday texters, and so forth."

Initiated by Asia Brewery Marketing Budget Manager Mr. Michael Ngo, ABS-CBN Sales Director Mr. Nico Montinola and Zenith Optimedia agency, the Colt Ice-Myx VJ project marks a milestone in the partnership between Asia Brewery and ABS-CBN, to deliver the latest and most exciting sounds to music lovers all over the country.

But much more are in store for Myx viewers and listeners. As Product Manager Mr. Francis Chua will tell you, "Look out for more exciting Colt Ice-Myx programs and events!"

Launching the Colt Ice-Myx partnership are:
Seated From Left to Right:
Mr. Mando Cosio (Vice President for Media, Zenith Optimedia), Mr. Jun G. Alcantara (Vice President for Marketing, Asia Brewery), Ms. Joy Hendrickson (Colt Ice VJ in Myx) and Mr. Michael Ngo (Marketing Budget Manager, Asia Brewery)
Standing From Left to Right:
Mr. Nico Montinola (Sales Director, ABS-CBN), Ms. Heart Evangelista (Myx VJ), Mr. Andre Alvarez (Senior Channel Manager, Myx) and Mr. Francis Chua (Product Manager, Asia Brewery)

ADVT

"GANDANG RICKY Reyes" on Ruffa: the works FASHION BY JAN ENER MANINGAT

Ruffa gets a Ricky makeover

FRIENDS and fans can't miss Ruffa Gutierrez's glow. When people tell her how great she looks, Ruffa responds, "My husband (Yilmaz Bektas) and daughter Lorin Gabriella) keep me beautiful."

But Ruffa also recognizes that looking great takes some work on her part. When she came home to the Philippines for the holidays, one of the first things she did was to visit beauty guru Ricky Reyes.

"Ruffa came to my salon and said, "Mother, give me the works," shares Ricky.

And work he did. Ricky gave her a shoulder-length cut with wispy layers that frame her face.

"All her show biz life, Ruffa's had long, one-length hair," says Ricky. "Now that she's a mother, she should sport a look that reflects her new lifestyle. The layered haircut I created is more grown-up but still very stylish."

"One of the pitfalls of married life is that women can get too busy or grow too comfortable," says Ricky. "They forget to take care of themselves. They gain

RUFFA/ A22

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BSP tightens rules on banks' big loans

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE POLICY-MAKING Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved tighter guidelines on banks' large credit exposures as part of a continuing bid to boost the banking system.

In a statement yesterday, the BSP said the new circular, which supports the policy on single borrower's limit (SBL), lists out the minimum standards to comprehensively manage large exposures in both stand-alone and group borrowers.

The SBL provision caps a bank's allowable loan exposure to a single borrower at 25 percent of its portfolio.

This developed as the BSP acknowledged that credit risk concentrations may arise from excessive exposures to individuals, related groups and groups with similar characteristics such as geographical location, economic or industry sectors.

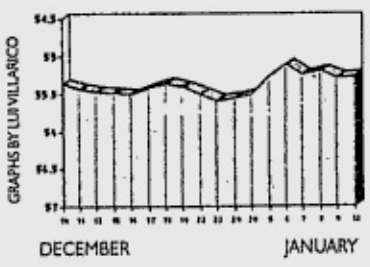
In monitoring large exposures, the BSP now requires the banks to maintain the following:

- a central liability record to be able to track credit exposures preferably based on an automated system;
- an adequate management information and reporting system;
- an annual review of the quality of large exposures and controls to safeguard against credit risk concentrations to be conducted by external or internal auditors;
- a prompt corrective action mechanism to address concerns and exceptions raised, and
- an independent compliance function to

BSP/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



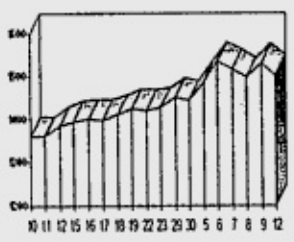
PESO-DOLLAR RATE
₱55.275 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 12, 2004
¥107.04 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 9, 2004

GOLD: $425.10-425.60
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 12, 2004

CURRENCIES

January 12, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.77887686	1.000000	55.228000
Japan	Yen	0.00732	0.009398	0.519000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.440766	1.849800	102.160800
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100341	0.128828	7.114900
Switzerland	Franc	0.638371	0.819605	45.265100
Canada	Dollar	0.613048	0.787092	43.469500
Singapore	Dollar	0.460465	0.591191	32.650300
Australia	Dollar	0.605423	0.777303	42.928900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.065986	2.652520	146.493400
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207695	0.266650	14.727100
Brunei	Dollar	0.459108	0.589449	32.554100
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000093	0.000120	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.020002	0.025681	1.418300
UAE	Dirham	0.212078	0.272287	15.037900
Euro	Euro	1	1.283900	70.907200
Argentina	Peso	0.269974	0.346620	19.143100
Brazil	Real	0.274253	0.352113	19.446500
Denmark	Kroner	0.134268	0.172387	9.520600
India	Rupee	0.017156	0.022026	1.216500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204995	0.263193	14.535600
Mexico	New Peso	0.072018	0.092464	5.106600
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530896	0.681617	37.644300
Norway	Kroner	0.115717	0.148569	8.205200
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013629	0.017498	0.966400
South Africa	Rand	0.115905	0.148810	8.218500
Korea	Won	0.000659	0.000846	0.046700
Sweden	Kroner	0.109762	0.140924	7.783000
Syria	Pound	0.017602	0.022599	1.248100
Taiwan	NT dollar	0.023112	0.029674	1.638800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000488	0.000627	0.034600

Shares close 1.82% lower



SHARE prices closed 1.82 percent lower yesterday as investors took profits on last week's sharp gains, dealers said.

They said most stocks have moved up too far, too fast and broad-based profit-taking was to be expected before investors attempt another advance given the recent run-up took the market to its highest level in 33 months.

(See stock market report on Page B2)

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index closed down 27.85 points at 1,501.02 having traded between 1,497.22 and 1,528.

Turnover fell to 252.5 million shares worth P1.04 billion from 437.23 million shares worth P1.54 billion Friday.

Decliners beat gainers 46 to 17, with 40 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index gained 0.05 points to 907.83 while the commercial-industrial index dropped 46.57 to 2,279.46. Property shed 5.57 to 576.62, while mining was down 59.91 at 1,584.23.

Oil was unchanged at 1.31 while banking and financial services shed 4.69 to 460.81.

"We're going through a bout of profit-taking and it might be spread over the next few days," said Oliver Plana of Asiasec Equities.

Plana said general sentiment on equities remained upbeat on the back of positive earnings forecast for 2003 and this year.

Market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) was top-traded and fell P45 to P950 while Globe Telecom shed P35 at P945.

Second most active stock Ayala Corp. was down 10 centavos at P5.70 while unit Ayala Land Inc. also shed 10 centavos to P6.20.

Manila Electric Co. "B" shares, available to foreign investors, gained P1.50 to P33. Meralco "A" was unchanged at P18.50. *AFP*

Deutsche Bank bags awards

DEUTSCHE Bank AG, Europe's second largest lender by assets, recently won the Bank of the Year category in the investment banking industry and Bond House of the Year from Thomson's International Financing Review (IFR), a London-based weekly capital markets magazine.

"The accolade that Deutsche Bank has received is well deserved, particularly in a highly competitive environment such as the financial sector. The recognition that we continue to receive is a testament to how widely available and effective our global franchise is. Deutsche Bank is able to provide high value and innovative solutions to all of its clients and this clearly highlights the importance of global distribution strength," said Enrico S. Cruz, chief country officer of Deutsche Bank in the Philippines.

IFR noted that Deutsche Bank made headway in the United States while defending its dominant position in the euro capital markets. Deutsche Bank also won bond house of the year and ranked second after Citigroup Inc. as international bonds underwriter.

INTEREST RATES

January 12, 2004-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 12-Jan-04	MART1 9-Jan-04
1 Month	6.4182	6.4067
3 Months	6.525	6.5125
6 Months	7.9625	7.9679
1 Year	8.5232	8.5054
2 Years	9.2982	9.27
3 Years	10.2339	10.245
4 Years	10.6554	10.6679
5 Years	10.05	11.0446
7 Years	11.3357	11.3482
10 Years	11.5732	11.6018
20 Years	11.9679	12.0018
25 Years	12.2643	12.2964

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

Vehicle sales up 7.73% in '03 to 90,535 units

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S automotive industry achieved a 7.73-percent sales growth in 2003 largely due to the increase in demand for commercial vehicles.

The growth in 2003 augurs well for the local automotive industry, which is targeting to post a much higher 10-percent growth this year and sell more than 100,000 units.

According to a joint report of the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) and the Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA), sales of motor vehicles reached 90,535 units in 2003 compared with the 84,041 units sold in 2002.

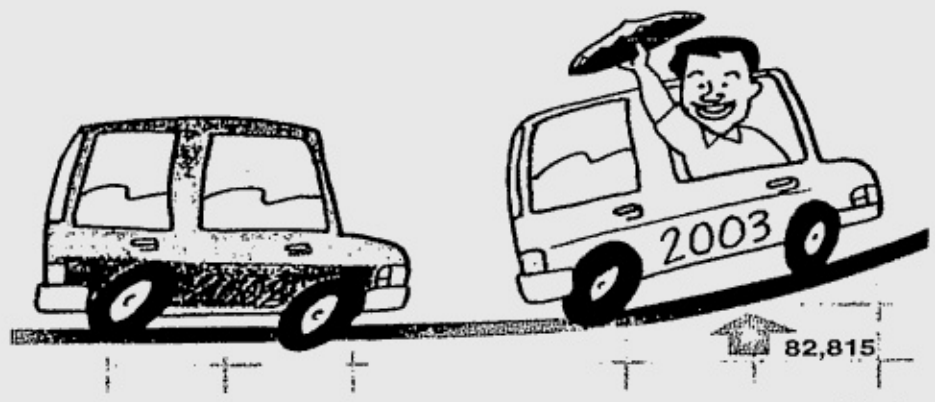
The 2003 sales figure, however, was still short of the 91,000 units targeted for the year.

Campi and TMA said the encouraging performance of the industry was brought by factors such as the implementation of the new auto excise tax, which rationalized and changed the excise tax system from being engine-based to price-based, and the introduction of new car models.

For December 2003, the industry sold 7,720 units, or higher than the 6,756 units sold in the previous month.

Sales of commercial vehicles, which captured 74 percent of the market grew by 7 percent in 2003 to 67,156 units from 62,743 units in 2002, indicating a continued growth trend in demand for the vehicle segment.

Automakers said the increase in the sale of commercial vehicles, which include Asian utility vehicles, light commercial vehicles, trucks and buses, was attributed to the aggressive promotion and introduction of new models that captured significant market share.



Sales of Asian utility vehicles rose 5 percent in the year to 39,318 units from 37,448 units in 2002. Sales of light commercial vehicles also grew by 11.7 percent to 24,606 units from 22,027 units in 2002.

The light trucks segment, meanwhile, also increased by 4.7 percent in 2003 to 2,585 units from 2,470 units the previous year.

Combined sales of trucks and buses, on the other hand, dropped by 18.9 percent to 647 units from 798 units in 2002.

Passenger car sales also rose by 9.8 percent in 2003 to 23,379 units from 21,298 units the previous year. On a month-on-month basis, sales significantly rose by 25 percent to 3,183 units in December from 2,550 units in November.

In both the commercial vehicle and passenger car segments, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. captured the biggest market shares.

For passenger cars, Toyota sold 11,247 units, grabbing 48.11 percent of the market. Honda Cars Philippines Inc. followed with 5,544 units, capturing 23.71-percent share of the passenger car segment.

For commercial vehicles, Toyota sold 16,574 units, accounting for 24.68-percent share of the market. Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. followed with 13,622 units sold, capturing 20.28 percent of the commercial vehicles market.

For 2004, the industry said it expects sales to slow down in the early part of the first quarter as dictated by historical trend.

But the market is expected to stabilize within the quarter and in the remaining quarters of the year following the full implementation of the new excise tax law.

PUBLIC OFFERING EYED

GMA 7 not for sale

By Abigail L. Ho

REACTING to persistent rumors of a buy-in, GMA Network Inc. stressed that it was "not for sale at this time," adding that it was actually studying the market in preparation for listing with the local bourse.

"The company plans to go public when it feels that the market is favorable," GMA Network corporate communications head Butch Raquel said in a statement yesterday.

Owners of the country's second largest broadcasting network—the Duavits (35 percent), Jimenezes (35 percent) and the Gozons (30 percent)—had chosen to speak out to stop speculations of a Smart buy-in persisted.

The company earlier denied having received any offer for a buy-in from Smart or any other firm, including Smart parent firm Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which attempted to gain a majority stake in the network in 2001.

Even if it had received such an offer from either Smart or PLDT, the broadcasting firm said it would be highly unlikely for a deal to materialize because of the two telecommunications firms' foreign ownership.

PLDT is 24.47-percent owned by First Pacific Co. Ltd., a conglomerate owned and controlled by the Salim family of Indonesia. Smart, meanwhile, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of PLDT.

"Neither PLDT nor Smart is qualified to buy any broadcasting company, since both companies are not 100-percent Filipino-owned. This was the reason why Mediaquest Holdings Inc., which is owned by PLDT employees, became the vehicle for the proposed acquisition of GMA Network in 2001," the network said.

Article 16, Section 11 of the Philippine Constitution barred any foreign company from acquiring a stake in a mass media outfit as this had to be 100-percent Filipino-owned.

GMA Network assistant vice president for legal affairs Dick Perez said the "control test" that the Securities and Exchange Commission used in determining the nationality of corporations did not apply to media entities because of that particular constitutional provision.

Under the control test method, corporations or partnerships with 60 percent of their capital belonging to Filipinos are considered of Philippine nationality.

"Though the 'control test' may have been applied by the SEC in determining the nationality of corporations, it cannot apply to industries that require 100-percent Filipino ownership. One such industry is mass media which includes broadcast," Perez said.

"The Constitution expressly provides that mass media must be wholly owned and managed by Filipino citizens," he added.

Junk Meralco rate hike, gov't urged

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CONSUMER groups yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to nullify a provisional authority (PA) given by the Energy Regulatory Commission to Manila Electric Co., which allowed the utility to raise its rates by an average of 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

Per ERC records, there were 17 groups and individuals opposing Meralco's latest petition for a rate increase of 13.58 centavos per kWh.

Former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who is again running for office with the Opposition, said Ms Macapagal should intervene on the issue that affects some four million customers, most of whom were small-income households.

Speaking for the Bantay Mamamayan-Philippine Consumer Watch, Enrile said in an interview after yesterday's hearing at the ERC: "The President should see whether this increase is reasonable and justified."

He reiterated that whatever funding Meralco needed for capital expenditures should come from its stockholders.

Last month, Meralco officials had said bulk of the revenues from the rate increase would go to electric capital projects—installation of new equipment or facilities and maintenance of existing ones.

"Consumers should not be burdened with these things. The stockholders should shell out their own money for projects," Enrile said.

S&P sees vintage 2004 for most Asian bourses

SINGAPORE—Asian stock markets are poised for another strong performance in 2004, boosted mainly by regional liquidity and the region's better-than-expected economic performance, Standard and Poor's said in a report.

"Asian liquidity is ample and rising, and likely to persist for the next 12 months," Steven Koh, S&P's Asian equity strategist, said in his outlook for regional bourses.

"2004 may be another vintage year for Asian equities," he said.

Adding fuel to the regional bourses is the resurgent US economy, where corporate earnings are set to improve as economic activity continued to expand at a healthy pace, the global ratings agency said.

But terrorist attacks as devastating as those on Sept. 11, 2001, a recurrence of the SARS epidemic and a US-China trade war could dent the optimism forecast for Asian bourses, S&P said.

Koh predicted Asian bourses would see an upsurge of 15 to 20 percent, benefiting mainly the equities markets in Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea and Malaysia.

Bourses that may experience a little of the widely predicted upsurge include Japan, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand, while those likely to lag in the region are Australia, China, New Zealand and the Philippines.

In China, Koh said the market "appears to suffer from overstretched valuations" and the year was likely to be marked by economic reforms by Beijing.

"We expect 2004 to be a year of economic reforms that would encompass a comprehensive round of tax reform such as expanding the tax base, improving tax collection and possibly reducing taxes," Koh said.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index is tipped to register a rise of 20 percent, S&P said.

It has given an "overweight" rating on Malaysian equities with the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange composite index expected to rise 15 percent.

In neighboring Singapore, S&P has raised its 12-month target for the main Straits Times Index by 15 percent to 1,977 points. *AFP*

DEALERS look at the trading floor and the monitoring board at the Philippine Stock Exchange. AFP

Bucks to the future

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

SOMEBODY is badmouthing the Social Security System, a.k.a. the SSS, for selling its minority stake in PCI Equitable Bank to yet another bank, Banco de Oro.

Only a few days ago, certain newsmen got what, I could only surmise, was some "news material" from an unknown source. It attacked the deal as bad for the SSS.

It even mentioned, albeit just in passing, that Gloriaetta had something to do with the deal, as it asked the innocent question, "was the deal connected with the elections?"

Belligerent and all, however, the "news" material was not exactly in the mood to reveal the sources. It supposedly came from some "concerned SSS members."

* * *

IN all my 25 years as a financial reporter, I still have to meet real live SSS members who are so concerned, they send to newsmen a well-written piece about their "concern."

That "news" material tells me that somebody just does not like the deal between the SSS and Banco de Oro.

In the stock market, from what I gathered, some members of the Go family, who control the management of PCI Equitable, are balking at the Banco de Oro acquisition.

Talk among newsmen has it, the material came from a PR group which also figured in the media war against PAL on the "open skies" lobby of foreign airlines.

All right, I will not stop you from making your own conclusion, but it looks to me that somebody is out to destroy the SSS-Banco de Oro deal.

* * *

ACTUALLY, those shares of the SSS in PCI Equitable represented a 26-percent interest in the bank, more or less the same as the Go family's.

Now PCI Equitable was the same bank which, only a few years ago, was shaken by news that it was the favorite bank of Jose Velarde.

Anyway, the buyer of the SSS shares, that is Banco de Oro, belonged to the SM group of Henry "Tatang" Sy. It should be a good deal for the small stockholders of PCI Equitable, i.e. the public investors.

The SM group is so liquid, it is swimming in cash. It is one of the few groups which are still investing heavily in this country.

For PCI Equitable, having a moneyed group as a major stockholder cannot hurt at all. You see, the SSS itself is absolutely broke.

* * *

BUT then those, er, "concerned SSS members" claimed that the SSS got the raw end of the deal. Really now?

For one, they noted that the SSS sold at a price much lower than its acquisition price for the same shares. Also, the SSS would not earn interest on the IOUs which Banco de Oro issued as payment. Both parties ever kept the deal a secret.

All right, the SSS bought the shares during the time of the man named Band…Wrist Band, before PCI Equitable got involved with the Jose Velarde account.

On hindsight, we know now that the bank almost collapsed as a result of public discomfort over that account. PCI Equitable even needed assistance from the BSP.

Obviously, the bank changed since the time the SSS acquired the shares. The changes even showed in the price of its shares in the market. They became much cheaper.

* * *

AND yet, based on the market price of PCI Equitable shares, Banco de Oro paid for the SSS holdings even quite handsomely. Banco de Oro paid the SSS about P43.50 per share for the minority holdings. Again, that's MINORITY.

That price meant that Banco de Oro paid a premium of 30 percent above the market price. For a minority interest, at that!

When Equitable Bank of the same Go family bought the entire PCI Bank from the Gokongwei-Lopez group, it paid a lower premium of only 20 percent over market price.

And when BPI of the Ayala family bought the whole of Far East Bank, it paid a premium of 22 percent of the market price.

Thus, the SSS set the record for the premium it got from Banco de Oro at 30 percent of market price. The SSS was even selling a minority interest, not a whole bank.

As for the "book value" as basis for the premium, unfortunately, it is hard to talk about it nowadays when you are buying banks, what with all their bad loans and more bad loans still to come.

In the case of Equitable PCI, included in its book value was the so-called goodwill worth about 40 percent of the book value. How "good" was the "goodwill" then?

* * *

NOW Banco de Oro gave the SSS some cash as down payment, while the rest was payable in six and a half years.

By that time, when Banco de Oro will have paid the SSS fully for the shares, the SSS will get P14 billion, which is the face value of the IOUs issued by Banco de Oro.

But Banco de Oro should pay the SSS for the shares only P8 billion, based on the price of P43 per share. And they say the SSS earns "no interest" on the IOUs.

Do the math—P8 billion against P14 billion! What do you think is bigger? Do you still think that the SSS gets nothing for waiting for six years for the payment? If you still think so, do you not also think that you should drown yourself immediately?

* * *

BEING listed companies, Equitable PCI and Banco de Oro don't go around town, telling every stock market speculator about their deals.

In an acquisition like this, you have to be fast and furious, or else the market beats you to it, and then the market speculators destroy everything, if they don't eat you alive.

And that's why the disclosure on the deal had to be made when, in fact, it was done, and not before, as the "concerned SSS members" suggested naively.

* * *

IT also said that, if the SSS waited for better market prices to sell the shares, it would get more. What a brilliant idea!

I have news for you, genius! Nobody can actually foresee what can happen in the market months from now, even weeks or days from now. What more, a few years from now, some six years from now!

Sure, the market can go up six years from today. It can also go down. Or it can also be dead. Who can say if the SSS will have to wait forever for a better price?

The SSS needs to play it safe. Here was a good deal, and so why not go for it? The SSS did not need the gift to tell the future to earn a few extra million bucks. The deal was there—already a reality! It was no longer just wistful thinking!

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of December 16, 2003
(Nearest Peso)

ASSETS		Amount
Cash and Cash Items	P	677,054,427
Due from Bangko Sentral		2,443,104,388
Due from Other Banks		3,447,985,267
Interbank Loans Receivable		4,151,744,026
Trading Account Securities (Net)		35,168,336,028
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		21,755,422,878
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)		67,642,938,149
Underwriting Accounts (Net)		1,469,800,000
Equity Investments (Net)		726,355,615
Due from Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad		320,610,740
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)		930,596,177
Other Assets (Net)		
Property Owned/Acquired		4,038,663,087
Others		5,522,117,527
TOTAL ASSETS	P	148,292,926,289

LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	13,924,864,155
Savings Deposits		15,255,309,250
Time Deposits		7,004,673,474
Special/Other Deposits		35,154,690
Due to Bangko Sentral		66,517,945
Due to Banks		7,204,304
Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad		0
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		670,516 291
Bills Payable		
BSP-Rediscounts/Special Programs		0
BSP Other Advances		0
Interbank Borrowings		81,512,490,031
Deposit Substitutes		0
Others		4,266,893 259
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		764,640,807
Other Liabilities		5,582,160,447
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)		0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	129,190,424,653

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		Amount
Capital Stock	P	12,500 000 000
Assigned Capital		0
Surplus		4 026,932 189
Surplus Reserves		236,782,453
Other Capital Accounts		2,339 786 984
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		19,102 501,636
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	148 292,926,289

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS			
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit			P 1,041,564,438
Bills for Collection			25,747 273
Spot/Future Exchange Bought			0
Spot/Future Exchange Sold			0
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements			16 840 310,474
Invested in			
Government Securities	P	12,815,494 845	
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock		285,370,159	
Loans and Discounts		1,021 225 923	
Other Assets		2,918,219 547	
Accountabilities			
Trust and Other Fiduciary		4 068,298,788	
Common Trust Funds		453,730,561	
Investments/Fund Management		12,328,280,125	
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities		0	
Other Contingent Accounts			41 063 178,871
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS			P 58 970 801 056

Other Information *

1 Deposits of		
a Government		P 24,763,728 938
b. Banks		349,475 368
c. Trust Department		78,774,491
2 Compliance with Magna Carta Law.		
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance	6% for Small Enterprises	2% for Medium Enterprises
Actual Compliance	19 60%	21 87%

		Amount
3. Amount of non-performing loans	P	9,864,350,645
4. Ratio of non-performing loans to total loan portfolio		11 81%
5. Amount of classified loans and other risk assets	P	11,531,118 368
6 General provision for loan losses	P	2,421,502,983
7 Specific provision for loan losses	P	4,149,943,173
8. Return on equity (ROE)		11 10%
9 Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	P	752,104 322
10 Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio		0 95%
11 Amount of past due DOSRI loans/advances	P	0
12 Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio		0 00%

* Amended to conform with Circular No 708 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to All Banks dated November 29, 1999

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MAKATI CITY) S.S

We, ELSA A GUEVARRA and EDGARDO F GARCIA of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

SVP ELSA A. GUEVARRA
Asst. Sector Head, Operations Sector and Head, Accounting

SEVP EDGARDO F. GARCIA
Chief Operating Officer

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 9th day of JAN 2004 at Makati City affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 14455972 issued at Makati City on February 28, 2003 and Residence Certificate No 20844299 issued at Makati City on March 12, 2003, respectively.

DBP - Res. Cert 00088606 - Makati City
Issued on January 8, 2003

LEONARDO C. CASTILLO
NOTARY PUBLIC
UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2005
PTR EXEMPTED UNDER PD 23

Doc No 301
Page No. 60
Book No. VII
Series of 2004

"Member of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
Deposits Insured up to P100,000 00"

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 12, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	18	17.75	18	120,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49.5	49.5	49.5	49.5	288,900
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38	36	36.5	172,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	1,180,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28.5	27.5	28	650,900
Philippine National Bank	24.5	24.5	24.25	24.25	92,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	21,000
Security Bank Corp.	16	17.25	16	17.25	6,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	10,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	150,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	8,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1840	1855	1840	1850	1,930
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	130,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1410	1415	1400	1400	3,330
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	26	26	25.5	25.5	34,700
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.73	0.73	780,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	970	975	935	945	68,700
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	235,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.045	0.045	6,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	2,100,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	230,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.65	51,000
Philipino Tel. Corp.	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.08	19,422,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	990	1000	950	950	333,630
Vivant Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	50,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	9,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.25	18.75	18.25	18.5	676,500
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	33.5	31.5	33	5,591,800
Petron Corp.	2.38	2.44	2.36	2.44	12,863,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	1	0.95	1	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	13,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.4	1,910,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	280,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	100,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	6,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,171,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	30	30.5	55,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.25	20.25	19.5	19.5	44,800
RFM Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	30,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55	55	54.5	55	22,100
San Miguel Corp. B	66	66	65.5	65.5	197,400
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	58,000
Universal Robina Corp.	5.7	6	5.7	6	219,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	8.5	8.5	8	8	15,000
Ayala Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	34,228,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.6	951,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	500,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.64	0.6	0.61	12,100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	340,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	950,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.02	1.02	0.98	0.98	380,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	21.5	22	21.5	21.75	539,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	400,000
Global Business Hldgs Inc.	50	61	50	60	4,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,000,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.94	1.94	635,000
Medco Holdings	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	300,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	341,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	10,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	6,070,000
Music Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	1,070,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	17,000
Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.85	0.88	0.85	0.88	110,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	6,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	900,000
Pryce Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	270,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.54	1,150,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	160,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	210,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26	26	25.5	26	223,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.2	4,035,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	22,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	600,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	310,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	2,620,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	930,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	50,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.5	9,626,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	800,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	2,290,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	5,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0075	0.0075	23,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.0028	0.0028	50,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	760,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.45	10,410,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	11,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	2,000,000

Court ruling favors AEV

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE CEBU Regional Trial Court has ruled in favor of the Aboitiz group in a legal tussle with the Garcia family, nullifying a share-swap deal that would have transferred 30-percent control of Visayan Electric Co. to the Garcia's Vivant Corp.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. chief finance officer Juan Antonio Bernad said the court had approved its petition to return the shares swapped by Hijos de F. Escaño Inc.—a private company owned by the Aboitiz and Garcia families whose principal asset is its controlling stake in Visayan Electric Co.—with Vivant.

AEV owns a 46-percent stake in Hijos and a 30-percent direct interest in Veco.

The Aboitiz group questioned the deal involving the exchange of about 2.09 million Veco shares owned by Hijos, which constituted about 30 percent of Veco's outstanding shares of stock, for Vivant shares.

The court agreed to give back to the Aboitiz group its 46.66 stake in Hijos, equivalent to some 1.66 million shares.

Bernad said the court had also ordered the creation of a management committee to oversee Hijos, as well as its partial liquidation through the surrender by AEV of all its shares in the holding firm.

In exchange for the shares to be surrendered, AEV will receive the 1.66 million Veco shares, which it can now consolidate with its other direct shares held outside of Hijos.

There will likewise be a distribution of 46.66 percent of Hijos' cash and liquid assets after payment of debts, Bernad said.

However, the court did not award any damages nor make pronouncements as to cost.

The Aboitiz group had sought P613 million in damages, the reversal of the share-swap transaction, and the dissolution of Hijos, believing that the deal was hatched at its expense.

The Garcias' Vivant, formerly PhilStar.com, invested in Veco by acquiring shares from Hijos, JEG Development Corp., MAI-I Resources Corp. and the Garcias themselves.

BSP tightens rules …

From page B1

ensure that all relevant internal and prescribed requirements and limits are complied with.

The BSP said the policy on large exposures and credit risk concentrations covered limits that were "reasonable" in relation to capital and resources for various types of borrowers, group of related borrowers, individual industry sectors, individual countries and various types of investments.

The policy also covers circumstances in which those credit limits can be exceeded, such as upon approval by the bank's board of directors or credit committee with delegated authority from the board.

It also lists out the procedures for identifying, reviewing, managing and reporting large exposures as well as the definition of exposure as well as the criteria to be used for identifying a group of related persons.

"Banks can be exposed to various forms of credit risk concentrations which, if not properly managed, may cause significant losses that could threaten their financial strength and undermine public confidence," the BSP said.

The circular also required banks to conduct stress testing and scenario analysis of their large exposures to assess the impact of changes in market conditions or key risk factors.

Tariffs on raw materials raised

By Michelle V. Remo

MALACAÑANG has ordered the Tariff Commission to increase tariffs on selected imported raw materials and semi-processed products to give local firms some protection against foreign products.

Under Executive Order No. 264 issued last Dec. 30, which would take effect this month, tariffs on 627 imported product lines that directly compete with local products will be raised.

The order was endorsed by the Tariff Commission, which reviewed the country's MFN (most favored nations) tariff rates last year.

The review, which was spearheaded by the Department of Trade and Industry, was prodded by requests from various local industries which claimed to have been badly affected by the country's low tariff environment.

The Philippines had one of the lowest tariff rates in the region.

The EO likewise called for the increase in tariffs on imports that do not directly compete with local industries but are used as inputs by local manufacturing firms.

The review of the tariffs on imported raw materials and intermediate products covered over 4,000 imported product lines, of which 3,672 will be kept at present levels, while those for 258 product lines will be reduced.

In October last year, Malacañang ordered the increase in the tariffs on imported finished products under EO No. 241.

Newly appointed Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima said in a press briefing that the DTI would continue looking for ways to address the concerns of local industries.

Australia to give $48M in ODA

THE AUSTRALIAN Agency for International Development (AusAid) has committed $48 million (A$62.4 million) in official development assistance to the Philippines.

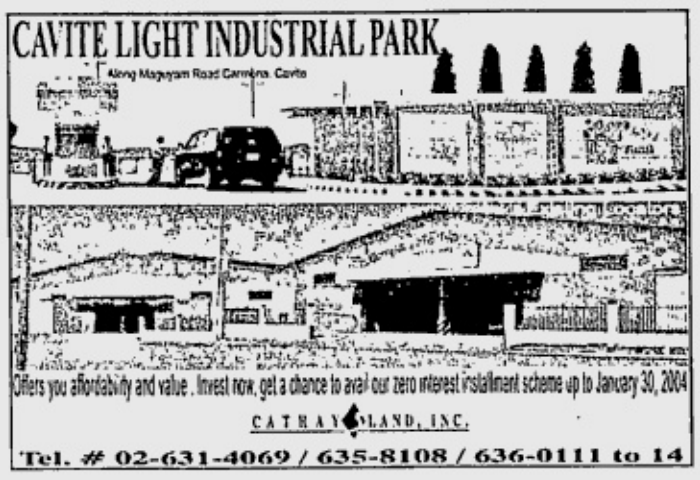
Australia, one of the country's top five bilateral donors, started the disbursement of the committed funds in 2003 and it will be completed this year.

AusAid said in a recent briefing paper that its development cooperation program with the Philippines aimed to support efforts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable and equitable development.

It said the new country program strategy for 2004-2008 focuses on three broad themes: policy reforms, peace-building and sustainable rural development.

Australia also provides assistance to nongovernment organizations and people's organizations.

Doris C. Dumlao



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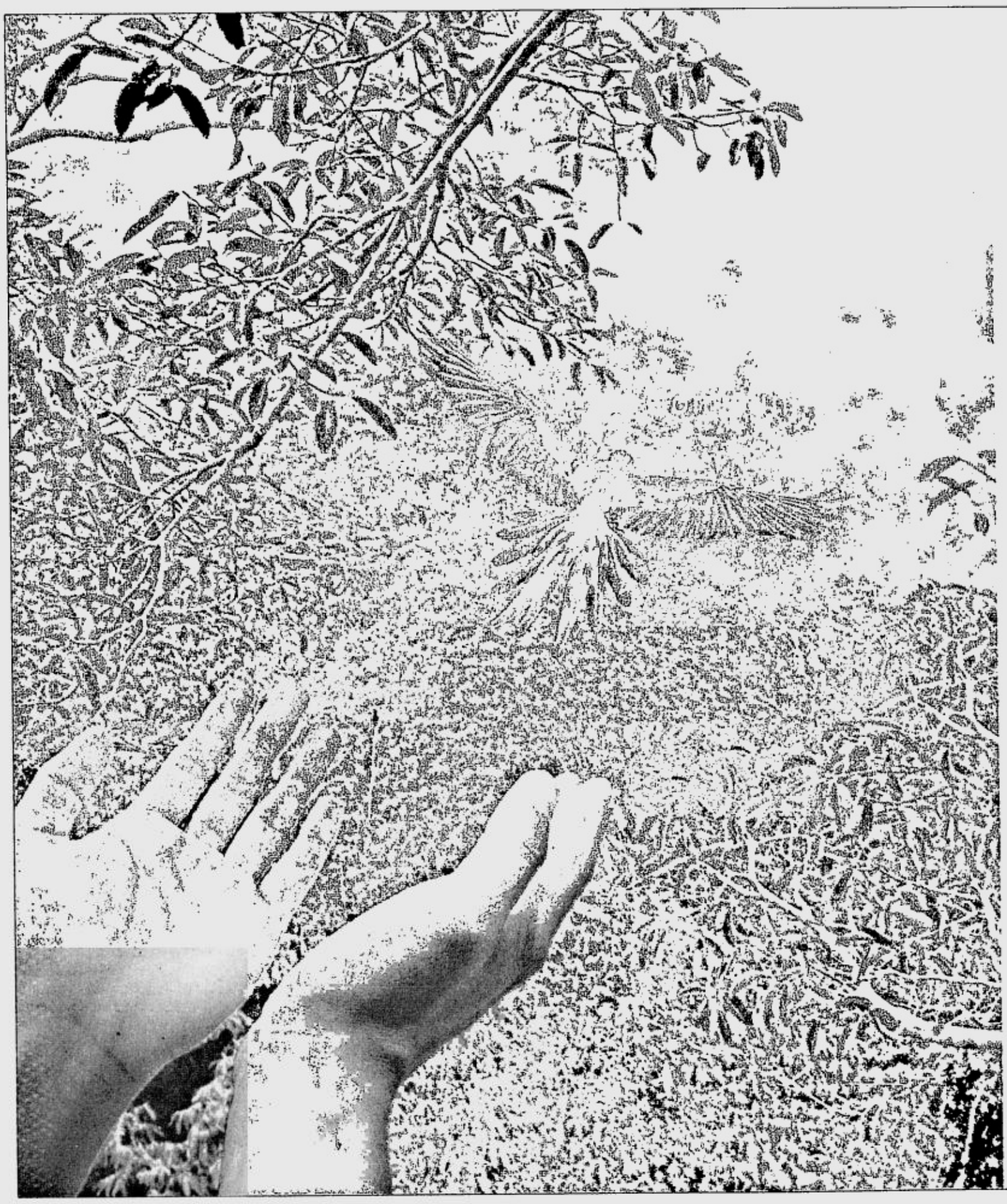
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a **20% Cash Dividend** or **P16.85 million** has been declared by the Board of Directors to all stockholders of record as of 15 January 2004. Said cash dividend shall be payable on 16 February 2004.

Should you have any further questions regarding the declaration of cash dividend, please feel free to contact our office at telephone numbers 891-07-06/811-34-77 and telefax no. 891-07-10.

ATTY. GUIA SANTOS-QUA
Corporate Secretary



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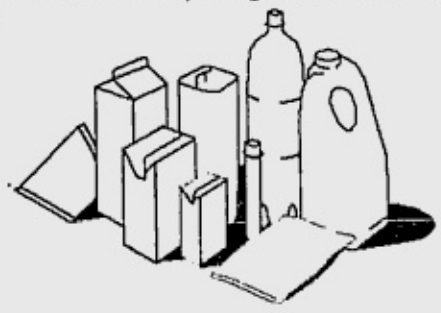

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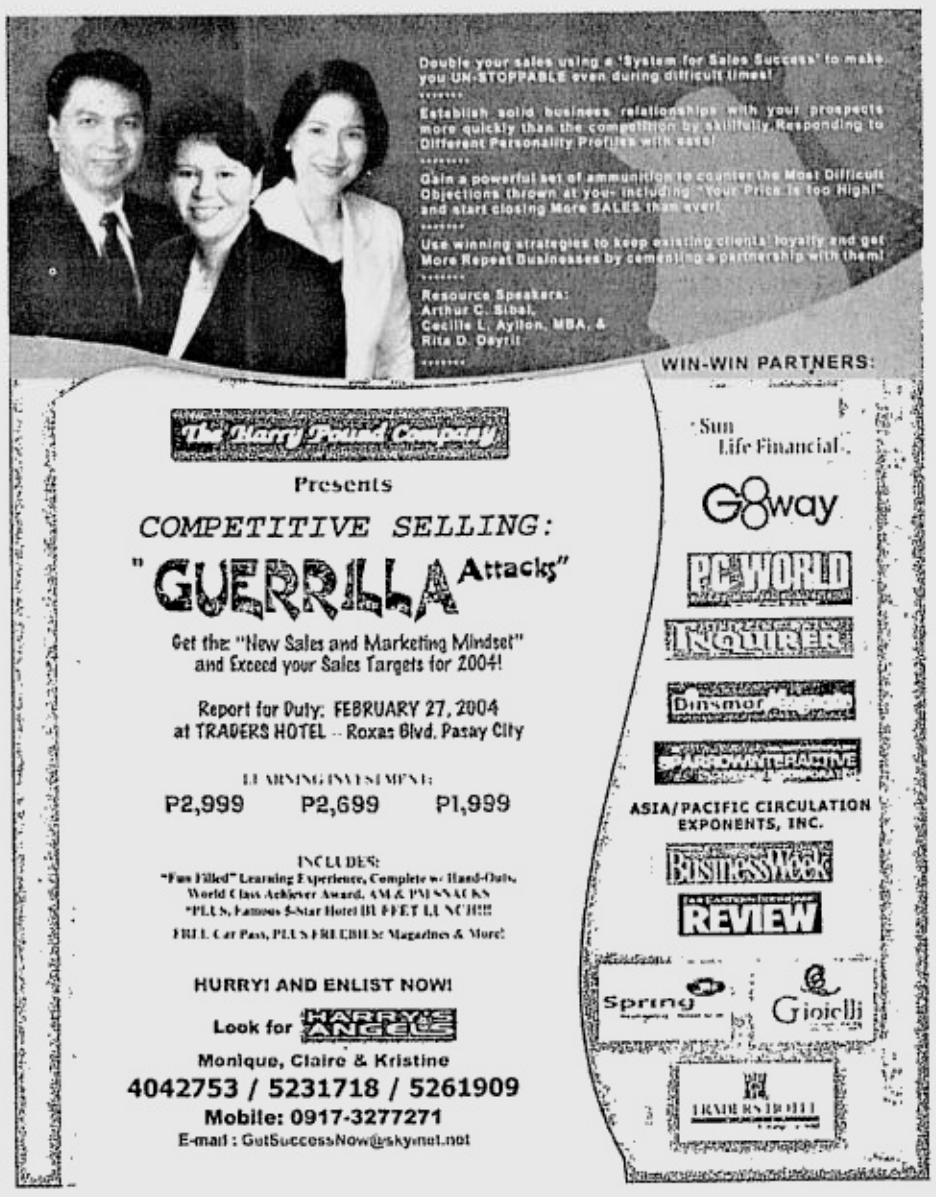
General Manager

Note: For the extension of laterals lines for the following areas:
1. Silagan, Allacapan, Cagayan
2. Tamalunog, Flora Apayao
3. Zimay, Paddaya, Aparri
4. Zone 4, 5 & 6, Callao, Gonzaga

Source of fund: 2002 National Electrification Administration (NEA) Subsidy

(PDI – January 6 & 13, 2004)



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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

RAFAELA ANTONIO DE LEON

who died on 5 January 2004

wish to convey
our sincerest gratitude
and appreciation to our relatives,
friends, and all those who sent
condolences, flowers
and donations, prayed, called,
conducted and attended the
funeral services, helped
and comforted us in so many
ways during our time
of bereavement.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." **John 14:6**

Brig. Gen. RAFAEL MANARANG MANIAGO

AFP, PMA '62

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace & Goodness of the Lord on the 11th day of January 2004 at the age of 66.

He is survived by his wife **Evelyn** & son **Raymond**; daughter-in-law **Jona**; grandchildren **Franco Miguel, Jalea Ann**; brothers and sisters-in-law **Alfredo** and **Edith, Prospero** and **Puring, Jesus** and **Ellen, Felecito** and **Shirley, Fernando**; his sister **Rosario** and husband **Francisco**.

They and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati.

Interment will be on Thursday, January 15, 2004 at 12 noon.

ATTY. CARLOS LABIS GALARRITA

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 11, 2004.

His wife **Batch**; loving children **Carlo, Paolo** & **Melissa**; granddaughter **Micaela Andrea**; father **Francisco C. Galarrita** (†); mother **Juliet Galarrita**; brothers and sisters; relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the St. Jerome and Sta. Susana Parish, Alabang. Interment will be at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat on Thursday, January 15, 2004 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass in St. Jerome.

SECRETARY JOSE D. LINA, JR.

and the **DILG** family deeply mourn
the untimely demise of

DILG Region XI Director ROMEO S. JARDENICO

who died on January 9, 2004 at the age of 63.

His remains lie in state
at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Chapel
at J. Camus St., Davao City.
Interment is tentatively scheduled
on January 16, 2004.

The DILG family extends its deepest sympathy
to his wife **Carmelita** and children **Tess, Dacky, Totsie, Atchong** and **Bong**.

We request the pious readers to pray
for the eternal repose of his soul.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Copy of Death Certificate
2. Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

Dr. Mariano T. Lim

Died in the Grace of our Lord on January 9, 2004 at the age of 72.

His bereaved wife **Charie**;
children **May** and **Leo, Bong** and **Malai**;
grandchildren **Lean, Miguel** and **Yanna**,
request your prayers for the eternal
repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state
at the Christ the King Chapel A,
Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday,
January 14, 2004 at Loyola Memorial Park,
Marikina City after the 9:00 am Mass
at Christ the King Church.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." **John 11:25-26**

"For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." **John 3:16**

MARIA ELERIA LEOPANDO

(Spouse of the late Jose Redor Leopando)

of Siniloan, Laguna

who joined her Creator on January 11, 2004 at the Manila Doctors Hospital at the age of 82.

Her loving children **Galo** and **Evelia Palma, Zorayda**, and **Jocelyn** and **Precioso Sapina**; grandchildren **Ma. Rosario, Ma. Regina, Ma. Romina, Ma. Leticia, Jennifer Marie** and **Patricia Ann**; brother **Ernesto Eleria Sr.**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to join in praying for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains will lie in state at the following:

- Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City, January 12 until Wednesday morning, January 14
- Family residence in Siniloan, Laguna, January 14 until Saturday, January 17

Interment will be at Siniloan Catholic Cemetery, Saturday, January 17, 2004 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at St. Peter and St. Paul Parish Church.

"There is an appropriate time for everything and a time for every affair under heaven..." **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

Thelma Adamos Feria

Customs Intelligence & Investigation Service
Bureau of Customs

Peacefully joined her Creator on January 10, 2004 at the age of 65.

Her loving brothers and sisters **Cristeta** (†), **Winnie** (†) & **Cards** (†), **Salud** & **Mar** (†), **Aning** & **Andy** (†), **Tony** (†) & **Lirio, Geling** (†) & **James, Totoy** & **Letty, Belen** & **Kit, Pacing** & **Dodo** (†), **Rebing** (†), **Jolly** (†) & **Lina, August** & **Marina, Vic** & **Batch**, nephews & nieces, relatives & friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains now lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Chapel 2, New Building, Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City, on January 15, 2004, Thursday, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

People, Events & Products

Editor Aries Espinosa

Vision Express: Making things clearer for Southeast Asia

WHEN businessman Norlito "Lito" Domantay brought the Vision Express chain in the Philippines under a joint venture agreement almost 10 years ago, he knew he had a winning concept, because Vision Express offered something no other optical store in the country could deliver: one-hour service.

Now, after conquering the Philippines, Domantay is setting his sights on other countries in Southeast Asia. After moving the company's financial headquarters to Singapore, he is now set to open three more Vision Express stores in Brunei, Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) and Thailand. The store in Brunei is set to open in the next few months. Including those in Singapore and Guam, these new stores will bring Vision Express' overseas branches to five. If he is successful, he says, he also wants to put Vision Express stores in Hong Kong, Jakarta (Indonesia) and Seoul (South Korea).

In the beginning, Lito's British partners wanted to expand to Europe instead of Asia. But he had other ideas. So he bought out his British partners, and soon after, launched his expansion bid into Southeast Asia. He put up his first store in Guam in 1999. Since then, Lito - through a combination of business savvy, sound instincts and good timing - has turned Vision Express into the most successful optical chain this side of Southeast Asia. Vision Express Holdings, the parent company, has registered sales of over $5 million (or more than P250 million, a figure Lito hopes to double in the next three to four more years).

It was his success in the Philippines that gave Lito the impetus to push forward into other countries in Southeast Asia. "I don't know how the other optical stores are faring, but we are growing at an average of 20 percent a year, recession or no recession," he reveals. "I think it's mainly because we have something new to offer people, which is the one hour service. If your have something unique that customers want, then you will succeed."

And despite the downturn in the world economy, he feels confident about pushing his expansion plans more aggressively.

"The eyewear market in Asia is growing," he says with full confidence. "As the population ages, the market gets larger because more people need eyewear. Of course, it also helps that eyewear is now viewed as a fashion accessory, so most people have more than one pair, depending on their mood or the occasion.

Lito assures that Vision Express customers in the new stores in Southeast Asia can expect the same kind of quality and service that has become the company's hallmark.

2003 RED HORSE MUZIKLABAN ROCK CHALLENGE CHAMPS

Amphitheater, Riverbanks Center: rockers from all over converged in this side of Manila to witness this year's most anticipated rock showdown - Red Horse Muziklaban Rock Challenge. Ten of the country's best aspiring rock bands were all in battle mode. Armed with awesome talent and smoldering passion to dominate - these guys stirred the throng's auditory senses. The crowd found themselves being sucked into a heady rock whirlpool. But from this musical cyclone, Fuseboxx emerged to seize this year's title. Aside from the electrifying rock encounter, everyone present was also given a taste of genuine rock culture. Body art and body piercing booths were set up in the area, as well as listening stations where people can play and hear their favorite rock tunes. There were also games and of course, an overflow of Red Horse Beer. Some of the county's hottest bands delivered the pack to rock nirvana. Shown are the champs of the Red Horse Muziklaban Rock Challenge.

INSULAR LIFE HOLDS MEDICAL MISSION IN ADOPTED SCHOOL

Insular Life, the country's largest Filipino life insurance company held a medical mission for 300 indigent students and children on Nov. 22, 2003, at the Muntinlupa Itaas Elementary School, as part of the company's 93rd anniversary activities. Close to 50 employee volunteers from Insular Life and its subsidiary I-Care, and 10 volunteer doctors provided medical consultation and treatment, and distributed vitamins, prescribed medicines, and hygiene kits donated by Insular Life employees to those who came for consultation. Photo shows the team of volunteers led by (standing 4th, 5th and 6th from left, respectively) I-Care president Carlos da Silva, I-Care vice president Dr. Perry Peralta, and Insular Life senior manager Felicitas Concepcion.

Sun Cellular all set for Phase IV

SUN Cellular continues to expand its cell site infrastructure through a partnership with Ericsson. The agreement will enable Sun Cellular to strengthen its network coverage nationwide, particularly in Visayas and Mindanao.

The expansion thrust is inline with Sun Cellular's Phase IV infrastructure development as it increases its cell sites to more than 1,200 across the country to enable its subscribers with better nationwide coverage and clearer signal. Phase IV will overlap with Sun Cellular's Phase III of infrastructure development that is ongoing until May 2004.

The turnkey agreement with Ericsson will provide for the supply, installation and commissioning of telecommunications equipment and solutions that will further enhance the quality of coverage and data delivery for Sun Cellular subscribers.

With Ericsson as its infrastructure partner for Phase IV, Sun Cellular will be enabled with the latest Edge-ready solutions that will make the network ready for high quality data services to its customers to meet market demands, as well as build a solid foundation for Sun Cellular's fast development and smooth evolution to 3G networks in the future.

"We are pleased to have Ericsson as our infrastructure partner for this next phase of development," says Charles Lim, head of Sun Cellular. "We are confident that Ericsson's leading-edge technology and expertise will not only enable us to meet our goal of providing the highest quality service to our customers, but also will provide a sound platform for future expansion into Edge and 3G services."

Edge (Enhanced Data rates for Global Evolution) is a standardized set of improvements to the GSM radio interface that brings higher data rates and increased spectral efficiency for data services. Edge triples the capacity of GPRS (General Packet Radio Service), allowing operators to deliver Mobile Internet services requiring higher capacity and data speeds using their existing infrastructure.

Examples of services that could be offered to users over Edge include streamlining media, logistic-based applications and mobile office applications that could enrich users' everyday lifestyle and efficiency at work.

(( ))

COMMISSION ON GRADUATES OF FOREIGN NURSING SCHOOLS

Invites:

Placement and Review Centers, Recruiters and Applicants to an

OPEN FORUM

On the CGFNS Application Process
with **Miss Barbara Nichols, CEO of CGFNS**
on Thursday, January 22, 2004
at 6:00 pm SHARP to 8:00 pm
at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel

As seating capacity is limited, prior advance registration is required,
Please call: 722-2704 or 722-2738 for a reservation.
Walk-ins shall be admitted depending on space availability.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu

BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City
----oOo----

INVITATION to APPLY for ELIGIBILITY and to BID

Interested Contractors are invited to apply for eligibility and to submit bids for the supply of labor, tools, equipment and necessary supplies in performing and rendering the following services for the Province of Cebu covering the period March 01, 2004 to December 31, 2004

	ABC
A. JANITORIAL SERVICES	
1 Cebu South Bus Terminal (10 persons)	P956,000.00
2. Cebu Provincial Capitol Building and Premises (20 persons)	P1,358,000.00
B. SECURITY SERVICES	
1 Four (4) Province-owned properties/installations (15 Guards) – Formerly Cebu International School – Bamlad, Cebu City – Formerly Sudlon Agricultural School – Lahug, Cebu City – Department of Agriculture Depot – M. Velez, Banawa, Cebu City – IT Parking Lot – Lahug, Cebu City	P1,440,468.00
2. Cebu South Bus Terminal (6 Guards)	P576,200.00

In order to qualify for participation in the public bidding, the bidders should conform to the eligibility criteria as prescribed under Section 23.6 of the approved IRR-A of Republic Act No. 9184

Eligibility and Bid Forms, tender documents and request for quotation will be available for issuance on January 13, 2004 within the government prescribed office hours at the BAC Secretariat, PGSO, Dep-Ed Bldg., Cebu Capitol, Cebu City, upon payment of Php P500.00 per request of quotation which is not refundable

Closing date for issuance of the eligibility and bid form, tender documents and request for quotation will be on January 21, 2004. Pre-Bidding Conference will be conducted on January 22, 2004 at 10:00 A.M. for Janitorial Services, 2:00 P.M. for Security Services at the BAC Conference Room, Office of the Provincial General Services. Bidding date will be on February 03, 2004 at 10:00 A.M. at BAC Conference Room, PGSO, Dep-Ed Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City

All particulars relative to the eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids and award shall be governed by the implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

The Bids and Awards Committee of the Province of Cebu reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or formality therein and to accept bids considered complying and most advantageous to the government

For more details and information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at Tel. No. 253-9614 / 253-3995.

This requirement is also posted at the PGSO Bulletin Board, Dep-Ed Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO T. HABIN
BAC Chairman

(PDI: January 13 & 19, 2004)

Clips

SPCCMP 3rd Annual Convention

THE SOCIETY of Pediatric Critical Care Medicine Philippines shall hold its 3rd Annual Convention from Jan. 14 to 16, at the Gerry Roxas Convention Center, Roxas City. Theme for this year's convention is "Critical Care... Relevance in Pediatric Practice", which aims to help participants develop the necessary skills on their holistic approach to critically ill children, help acquire the competence in setting up an ICU in their respective areas and to acquaint participants with the various ethical issues arising in the ICU. Speakers for the convention are professor Donald Shaffner, professor Myron Yaster both from John Hopkins Hospital U.S.A. and professor Enrique Ostrea of Wayne State University. Highlights for the three-day seminar shall focus on the following: 1) plenary lectures, 2) simultaneous Symposia, 3) interactive symposia, 4) panel discussion, 5) interesting case presentations. Registration fee is P1,000. For more information please look for Deng, Dr. Anne Agnes, Dr. Lala Valencia or Dr. Willy Dublin at PCMC-ICU (632)9246601 local 238. You may also inquire from UST Hospital-ICU (632)7313001 local 2363 or 2304.

Pasig River Heritage Marathon 04 heats up

THE NEXT Pasig River Heritage Marathon will have a more exciting dimension when it holds its fourth edition in February 2004. Apart from the grueling marathon itself, a Marathon Weekend highlighted by the Family, Sports and Recreation Expo will serve as a preliminary event to the big race on Feb. 29. This two-day Expo will have exhibits, daily shows and fun activities. A world-class choir competition will also be held on Feb. 22. Deadline of filing of application is on Jan. 15. All interested Family Expo exhibitors and choirs may call the event secretariat at 756-5120/371-9783 or visit its website at www.themesnmotifs.com.

$1M in prizes up for grabs for JCB cardholders

JCB International, Japan's leading credit issuer, is giving out over US$1 million in spending credits to its loyal cardholders worldwide via its newest global effort dubbed as the "JCB Million Dollar Campaign". In the Philippines, the campaign is known as the "JCB Charge Spree, Cash for Free!" promo. Open to all active JCB cardholders in good credit standing, including holders of Bankard JCB and myDream JCB, the promo will run from Nov. 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004. Within the promo period, a minimum purchase of P1,000 made through their myDream JCB or Bankard JCB credit card (either in single or accumulated receipts) will earn cardholders the chance to take part in any or all of the five raffle draws that will give away P50,000 each to 8 lucky winners per draw or a total of 40 winners. For more information, call the myDream JCB customer hotline at 888-1818 or Bankard customer service at 888-1-888.

NEW PANCITERIA LIDO BRANCH

Don Odil Franchise Corporation, franchise owner of Panciteria Lido since 1936 recently held the grand opening of its second franchise outlet located at Westlife, West Avenue corner Bulacan Street. The grand opening was graced by Annie Go, CEO of Don Odil Franchise Corporation and Edward Ting of Cheryl Ting Yu Enterprise. The famous Chinese restaurant is now at the heart of West Avenue ready to serve all of us with the best tasting Pugon-roasted asado, their famous noodle called Chami and an array of authentic Chinese food preparation perfected from generation to generation.

BEST FACIAL CARE CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR 2003

Manuel S. Negado, president of Facial World & Skin Whitening Center Inc shows the trophy awarded by the Consumers League of the Philippines Foundation for the Most Outstanding Facial Centre for 2003. The ward was given at the Irwin Theater of Ateneo de Manila last October 25.

ProductFiles

Jollibee's Go Large Coke

LOOKING forward to a satisfying meal, you grab a piece of that crispylicious, juicylicious Chickenjoy and dip it in the rich and luscious gravy. You take a gulp of Coke every now and then. Your craving for the all-time favorite Chickenjoy is so intense that you get one more piece of it and then...: no more Coke? Well, it's a good thing you can Go Large Coke with Jollibee. For an additional P4 you can upsize your regular size Coke to a large cup and enjoy a more enjoyable Jollibee value meal and a thirst-quenching beverage. As more new products and value meals emerge day-by-day in Jollibee, accompany them with a thirst-quenching large Coke drink. This offer is also available to other Coke products like the Coke Light, Barq's and Sprite. Go Large Coke and enjoy a Jollibee value meal 'na lalong sumasarap sa bawat kagat.'

Avoiding common rental property problems

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

WE have heard of many stories from our friends about difficult landlords as well as difficult tenants. Perhaps, you may have experienced the same problems.

Problems concerning rental property are mainly caused by inadequate knowledge of the process of transaction itself and could have been avoided if only all things were very clear prior to the usage of the property.

Avoiding problems requires that you have an adequate knowledge of the various processes and paperwork needed to come up with a reliable real estate rental agreement.

BUILDING DREAMS

The common problems concerning rental property include:

• **Escalation Clause**—If you are the landlord with a vacant property for some time, it may be a wise idea not to ask for a rent increase with the first two years to attract new tenants into your property. After this period, make sure however that you are entitled to a yearly increase in rental subject to the allowable percentage increase prescribed by law. Check with your legal counsel or with your broker regarding the limits of the rent increase allowed.

• **Furniture**—Some housing and condominium units are rented with furniture, appliances and even with bed sheets. A major cause of disagreement when the contract is over is the payment of repair for damaged furniture and appliances.

To avoid disagreement, it is best to take a picture of the unit including all furniture and appliances and keep it as a reference. This will become a handy reference to help both parties identify the original condition of the furniture and appliances.

• **Association Dues**—Make it clear on the party responsible for the payment of the association dues. Most of the time, it is the tenant who will have to pay the association dues. This monthly fee will have to support the maintenance, cleaning and security of the area.

• **Ownership of Improvements**—Some tenants, after occupying the property, make improvements to suit their tastes. These include repainting of walls, addition of cabinets, landscaping and the like. When the time comes for them to leave, they tear down every bit of improvement that they have done and leave the property in total disarray.

Before signing any rental agreement, make sure that any improvements that you intend to do should at least be partly shared by the landlord or the tenant. This is the most common arrangement although some owners are never willing to share in any of the usable permanent improvements.

• **Real Estate Taxes**—Payment of real estate taxes sometimes becomes an issue. For upscale houses, the real estate taxes can cost at least one to two months rental so it should be clear on who will be paying it—the tenant or the landlord.

• **Nonpayment of Rent**—It can happen that the monthly rent that you are expecting cannot be paid on the day you expect it. It should be clear in the contract as to what recourse should be done in case rent is not paid.

The collection and payment policy should be very clear during the negotiation stage.

• **Utility Bills**—The utilities are most of the time to be paid by the tenant but as obvious as it may seem, this should be clearly stated in the rental contract.

• **Nonconforming Use**—Sometimes, residential pieces of property being rented are used for commercial purposes. Residential houses are sometimes converted into garages, shops and the like.

If you are a landlord, make sure that the property that you are renting out will be used in accordance to what you have agreed. Protect yourself for you might get yourself into trouble.

• **Contract Renewal**—After the agreed upon rental duration (usually for about 5, 10 or 15 years), a time extension has to be renegotiated especially if it concerns a commercial property and the business has become very successful. The path toward getting an extension should be well spelled out in the rental agreement.

Final Note. A smooth landlord tenant relationship is the secret to the successful rental of a place. This is achieved if both parties are honest and open during negotiation and that all concerns are brought up and are properly resolved. It is necessary that all of the things agreed upon during the verbal negotiation should be written in a contract to make sure that both parties will remember the agreed items even after a long time. Always ask for the help of a real estate professional or a legal counsel of your choice.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT RUSH SALE!!!

1 unit "Brand New" **DRESTA 515E** (formerly **INTERNATIONAL 515 Payloader**) wheel loader, 1.62 cu. m. capacity. ROPS CANOPY, powered by **Komatsu S6D102E-1** diesel engine, 90 kw (120 hp) SAE net power.

2 units "Brand New" **VIBROMAX W70** walk behind double drum vibratory roller, 800 kgs. operating weight, powered by Hatz 1DS1S diesel engine, 9.1 kw (12 hp) SAE net power.

Inquire and inspect units at:
INTERNATIONAL HEAVY EQUIPMENT CORP. (IHEC),
Kubota Center, 155 Panay Avenue, South Triangle, Q.C.

Or call
Tel. Nos. : 929-3547, 929-3548
Fax No. : 929-3545
E-mail address : *ihecmla@netasia.net*

Ayala Westgrove Heights nature lovers' scenic escape

RESIDENTS of the Ayala Westgrove Heights subdivision have continuously attested to the fact that even the sturdiest urbanite can find respite from pressing demands and strains of working conditions in the metropolis with the beguiling, greenery-rich endeavor of Ayala Land Inc.

Its beauty transcending mere brochure copy and photographs, the upscale subdivision, which is just 2.5 km away from Sta. Rosa, Laguna, is best experienced for oneself, its rapidly growing number of residents acknowledging how it has become a lush and escapist world in itself.

Hidden paradise

Stepping into the world of Ayala Westgrove Heights has aptly been described as akin to discovering a hidden paradise, as the country's leading real estate developer has worked around naturally distinct features of the site to preserve their captivating characteristics. Thick foliages of thousands of mango trees and vibrant shrubbery comprise the blanketing tranquility of the Orchard, spread out across the property's first three phases.

This massive garden has gotten its share of enhancements that make it a deft combination of living and recreational elements, an environment richly existing apart from the virtually green-devoid urban setting. A combination of landscaping and hardscaping has made the area conducive for family picnics, fruit pickings, and even simple, laid-back sightseeing. Other outdoor activities such as jogging or skating have been encouraged by the presence of park walkways, a rink and children's play areas.

Greenbelt park

The relaxing Orchard Park, abundantly decked with an array of native fruit trees, has been strategically lined with such plants within separate zones for corresponding fruit-bearing seasons. This resplendent greenbelt park is bejeweled by flowers like yellow bells, star clusters, periwinkles, forget-me-nots and cape honeysuckles. Lesser known than the aforementioned plants but equally attractive species, like the ixora, the leea and the croton, help magnify the park's innate appeal, as well.

These inherent, visually enriching traits are made even more accessible and viewable with the construction of several gazebos located throughout Ayala Westgrove Heights' most scenic spots. One of these, the fishing deck in the Central Park, overlooks the pristine, man-made lagoon. Exemplifying the emphasis on satisfying the nature-lover's desires, this lagoon and other shimmering bodies of water in the property add a touch of balance to the subdivision's rolling terrains and textured land esthetics.

Such attention to preservation and improvement of flora is only one side to Ayala Westgrove Heights' comfortable facets. Those not yet familiar with it are assured of distinctions that have already won over its ever-growing community. This veritable garden paradise is a splendid alternative to increasingly unfavorable living conditions in the city, a festive cornucopia of natural colors that soothes one's spirit unceasingly.

Special day

And colors will be more abundant than usual for a special day, Jan. 18, as the Chinese New Year is greeted with events for the entire family like the Lion and Dragon Dance and the "Artscapes: Artistry of the Orient" day-long art workshop and exhibit.

Renowned artist Alex Chan Lim will be conducting lessons on how Chinese-inspired art would fit in homes, as well as basic techniques applied to Chinese paintings. His family will be assisting in the sessions, which will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Central Park Pavilion of Ayala Westgrove Heights.

₱1M in prizes at stake in HardiFlex grand draw

THE COUNTRY'S leading fiber element board manufacture, James Hardie Philippines Inc., in cooperation with Jollibee, will give away P1 million worth of prizes in the HardiFlex "Kwarta Kada Board" grand raffle draw on Jan. 30.

The grand prize winner will receive up to a total of P100,000, P10,000 for every HardiFlex board purchased during the period. Three regional winners will receive up to P50,000 (P5,000 for every board), while 35 key winners will get up to P10,000 (P1,000 per board purchased).

Marketing manager Junie Rondon said buyers of any HardiFlex variant are given a coupon for every official or delivery receipt instead of a coupon for every board or product. The OR or DR will be the basis for the amount of prize money the winner will receive, Rondon said.

Perennial problems

HardiFlex is a cost-effective building solution for wall and ceiling applications that combines the best qualities of plywood and concrete. Made of cement and wood fiber from replenishable New Zealand forests, James Hardie's flagship brand bears the wood look favored by Filipinos.

But unlike plywood, HardiFlex is water-resistant, termite-proof and fire-resistant—qualities that may well be the answer to the Filipinos' perennial problems with typhoons and flooding, pests and fires. HardiFlex has a 10-year guarantee against cracking, buckling, rotting or warping, and does not contain the deadly material asbestos.

Regional winner

HardiFlex is available in a wide range to meet the Filipinos' different housing needs. Variants included HardiFlex Lite; HardiFlex 4.5 mm, 6.0 mm, 9.0 mm and 12.0 mm; and HardiFlex Pro 4.5 mm, 6.0 mm, 9.0 mm and 12.0 mm.

Meanwhile, Vince Aguirre of Las Piñas City; Bingbing Quirol of Payahan, Baclaynon; and Rosa Lu of Nabunturan, Comval Province, won P5,000 for every HardiFlex board in the regional draw of "Kwarta Kada Board" held in Hardie's Cabuyao, Laguna plant recently. Eleven out of the 15 key winners (five from each region) also received the maximum prize of P10,000.

Buyers have until Jan. 15 to join the promo through the over 1,300 accredited HardiFlex outlets and dealers all over the country.

2004 CEP-real estate lecture series

THE URBAN Institute of Real Estate will conduct the five-day "2004 CEP-Real Estate Lecture Series" starting Jan. 19 from 1:30 to 6 p.m. at the Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Park Square Drive, Ayala Center, Makati City.

The lecture series will cover the following subjects: Joint Venture and Syndication for Realty Projects—Jan. 19; Property Development and HLURB Rules and Regulations with Updates—Jan. 20; Real Estate Taxation and Contract Documentation and Registration—Jan. 21; Property Management and Real Estate Appraisal—Jan. 22; and Real Estate Finance and Investment Analysis—Jan. 26.

This lecture series, which is accredited by DTI for CEP compliance, will have as lecturers lawyer Dennis Tablizo, a very well known lecturer on legal aspects of real estate; Lena Vergara, deputy head of technical services, Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB-NCR); and engineer Enrico Cruz, a licensed real estate consultant and 1st and 8th placer in the real estate appraiser's and broker's board examination, respectively, and who was invested as a "Real Estate Fellow" by the Philippine Council of Real Estate Educators.

For other details, Urban Institute may be reached at 681-0928.

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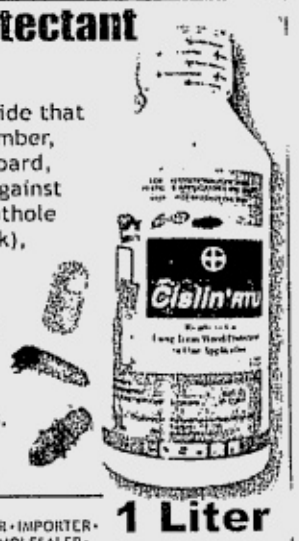

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REALESTATE

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

₱200-M waste facility to solve garbage woes

THE COUNTRY'S first engineered sanitary landfill

By Jerry Esplanada

THE 85-HECTARE waste facility is supposed to look and smell like the old Smokey Mountain in Tondo, the Payatas dump in Quezon City or the Montalban, Rizal dumpsite.

But it doesn't "because it's not your ordinary garbage dump; it's an engineered sanitary landfill or ESL," pointed out Dwight Ramos, vice president of IPM Construction and Development Corp. which operates the world-class facility on the Capas, Tarlac side of the Clark Special Economic Zone.

"There, you won't find the usual indicators of a dumpsite or landfill—swarms of flies, rodents, birds and human scavengers," said Ramos.

The P200-million project is an "engineered facility using an engineering solution to the garbage problem. It follows European standards," the lawyer also pointed out.

> There, you won't find the usual indicators of a dumpsite or landfill—swarms of flies, rodents, birds and human scavengers

Pioneer project

"For the record, it is the first of its kind in the country. The facility is also listed as a pioneer project with the Board of Investments," Ramos noted.

"IPM belongs to a consortium called Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. Its partners are the German firm Ingenieurburo Birkhahn & Nolte, Pampanga Sugar Development Co. and a group of local investors.

IPM, touted as the leader in the solid waste management industry here, is the first locator at the subzone of the former US military base.

Between 50 and 70 "controlled dumpsites" and hundreds, if not thousands, of "open dumpsites" are being used as garbage depositories.

Environment protection

"But with this engineered facility, garbage is contained in such a way the waste will not harm the environment, unlike an ordinary dumpsite or even a controlled dumpsite for that matter. It's actually a simple application of an old German technology," Ramos explained.

With ESLs "the emphasis is on protection of the environment," he emphasized.

"We do that through a multiple barrier system which starts with a 0.75-meter thick clay lining, compacted to such permeability that would not allow water to seep in. On top of that, literally, is a 2.5-mm think plastic lining called HDPE. So other than the clay, there is the German-made plastic lining. Then there's another barrier in the form of carpeting of the surface. On top of that, we installed thick perforated pipes specifically designed to collect lecheate, which is pumped out into a pond. The liquid is then processed through reverse osmosis before it is released into the environment. To make sure the pipes are protected, gravel linings are installed," Ramos explained.

Garbage compaction

In the IPM landfill, garbage is run over by a waste compactor.

Said Ramos: "Compaction is one of the engineering solutions to the waste problem. With proper compaction, we rid the garbage of leachate. In the process, the material solidifies. The cohesive state allows no more room for flies, rodents and birds, even human scavengers. That's the application of this German technology."

He assured "with garbage compaction, accidents like what happened in Payatas in July 2000 won't happen here."

Garbage cells

Each garbage cell has a capacity of about 500,000 tons. Upon reaching its maximum capacity, the cell will be sealed. "Through the years gas and leachate will be extracted from the capped cell," Ramos said.

IPM's first cell, which measures three hectares (plus an additional two hectares for leachate collection) with a 30-meter elevation, has a total capacity of 500,000 tons. The Capas facility can accommodate up to 10 cells, Ramos said.

The cells will occupy about 60 percent of the 100-hectare parcel of land. Another 20 percent is dedicated to a "buffer zone" in the form of a hilly terrain while the remaining 20 percent has been set aside for the field office, multipurpose hall and living quarters of the 70 or so IPM employees.

The landfill is "ideally located 6.5 kilometers away from the Capas town center and 100 kilometers north of Metro Manila," Ramos said.

Tons of garbage

For the landfill alone, IPM spent about P120 million. Construction of the facility started in April 2002. Completed eight months later, it has been processing since January 2003 some 100 to 120 tons of garbage per day.

"About 80 tons come from Clark while the rest are from the Tarlac towns of Capas and Bamban which we accept for free," said Ramos.

The facility can handle up to 2,500 tons daily. "We're not aiming to handle the waste of the entire Metro Manila which is more or less 8,000 tons per day. That's too much for us. That is why, there's really a need for similar facilities like what we're operating at Clark," said the IPM executive.

Waste management

According to an IPM report, with the enactment of Republic Act 9003, otherwise known as the National Solid Waste Management Act, there is a need to adopt a more professional and world-class approach to the disposal of waste.

In the same report, IPM president Isabelita Paredes-Mercado stressed that "as a key player in waste management, IPM aims to help improve the quality of life within the local environment."

Like Mercado, Ramos believes that "garbage is not really a problem. If done right, there will be no problem. It's just a question of management."

"This facility, like its counterparts in many developed countries, can be the right and long-term solution to the country's garbage woes," Ramos told the INQUIRER.

For several years now, IPM has been actively involved in the reclamation and development of Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila.

The firm's other waste management clients include the cities of Quezon, Pasig, Pasay and Marikina, the municipality of Taguig and the Asian Development Bank in Mandaluyong City.

Apart from waste-management, IPM has also undertaken real estate projects like the Lee Gardens Twin Towers, also in Mandaluyong; 120-hectare Northfields Residential Resort in Malolos, Bulacan; and the 40-hectare Tagaytay Tropical Greens in Cavite, as well as joint ventures with companies like AM Oreta & Co. Inc., Atlantic Erectors Inc., 4B Construction, Basic Construction and Monark Construction Corp.

IPM has also been involved in various phases of development projects of the country's leading land developers, including Robinsons Land Corp., SM Prime Holdings, Megaworld, Empire East Realty, Uniwide Sales Corp., Jardine Properties, Daiichi Properties, Cathay Realty Corp. and Rockwell Land Corp.

₱2.5-B project sets pace for newest metropolis

THE EDSA Central redevelopment signals the onset of its ambitious master plan with the recent contract signing of a P2.5-billion joint-venture agreement between developers Greenfield Development Corp. and Meridien Development Group.

At the center of the 24-hectare redevelopment of Edsa corner Shaw Boulevard will rise Soho Central, a mix-use residential and commercial project of the newest and most progressive metropolis.

The 35 story-development will have 30-60-square-meter units, each with its own balcony. Located near the newly built Edsa Central Bazaar, Soho Central will bring a world of convenience. It is accessible via a direct link to the MRT station.

For decades, Edsa Central has remained as a premier commercial destination and a major converging point and link for thousands of commuters. The development of Soho Central will add to this destination a landmark for a new, modern and mobile society.

The joint-venture agreement was signed by Meridien Development Group chair Jose EB Antonio and Greenfield Development Corp. chair Joselito D. Campos. Also present during the signing are MDG president Rafael Yaptinchay, CEO Ricardo Cuerva and GDC president Carlos Ejercito and director Jeffrey Campos.

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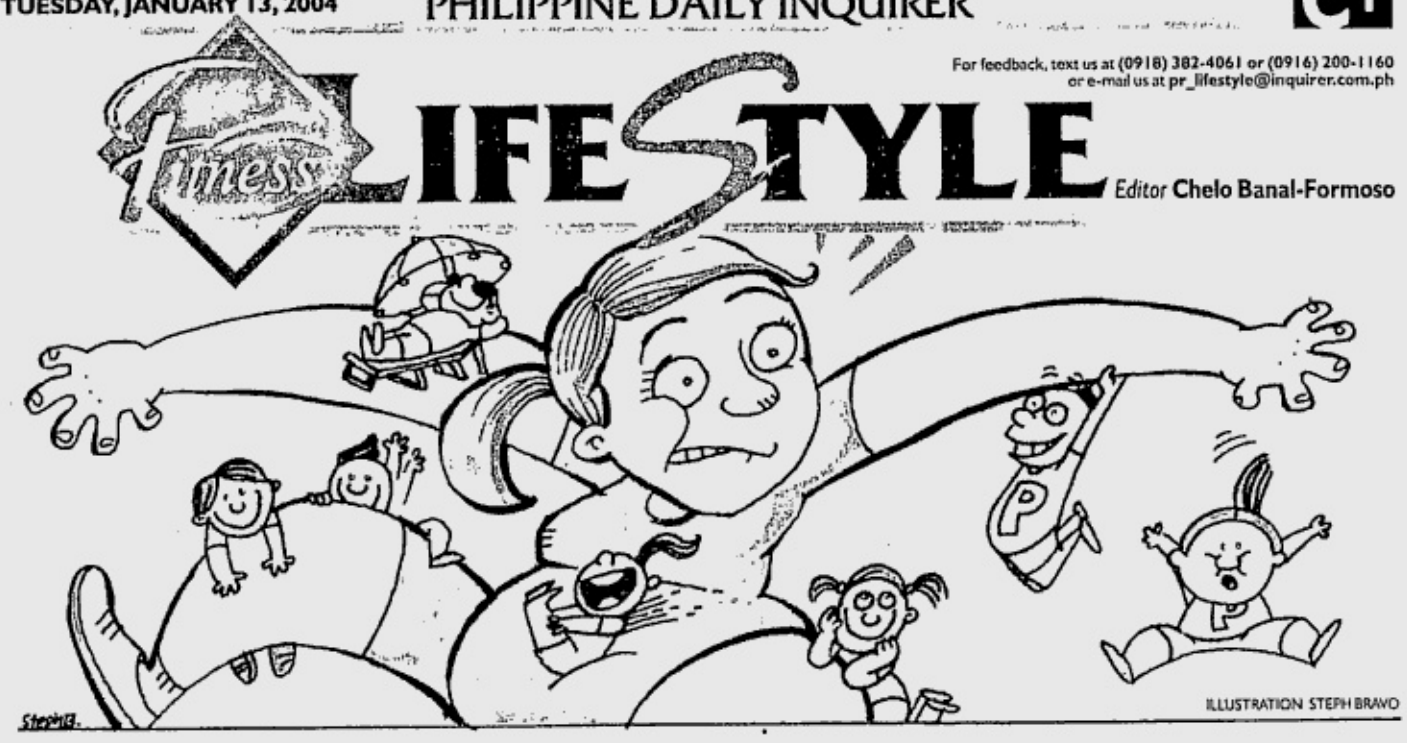
Fitness LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso



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Lose weight a pound at a time

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, I came across a poem titled "Only One Pound." No one knows who wrote it but I'm sure the author is someone who has successfully lost and maintained his/her weight. Here it is:

Hello! Do you know me?

If you don't, you should. I'm a pound of fat.

And I am the happiest pound of fat that you would ever want to meet.

Want to know why?

It's because no one ever wants to lose me.

I'm only one pound, just a pound!

Everyone wants to lose three pounds, five pounds, or fifteen pounds, but never only one.

So I just stick around and happily keep you fat.

Then I add to myself, ever so slyly, so that you never seem to notice it.

That is until I've grown to ten, twenty, thirty or even more pounds in weight.

Yes, it's fun being only one pound of fat, left to do as I please.

So, when you weigh in, keep right on saying, "Oh, I only lost one pound."

(As if that were such a terrible thing)

For you see, if you do this, you'll encourage others to keep me around because they'll think I'm not worth losing.

And, I love being around you—your arms, your legs, your chin, your hips and every part of you.

After all, I'm only one pound of fat!!!

Many people fail to lose weight permanently because they want instant success. Fitness magazines, television infomercials and diet gimmick marketing lead them to believe that losing weight is all a matter of buying a specific product or program.

It's relatively easy to lose weight through crash dieting or diet pills. It is maintaining the weight loss that is difficult because it has to be sustained on a daily basis.

Over the course of my career, I have known many people who lost large amounts of weight by severe dieting or by using diet pills, but they gained everything back. Some of these people have done it several times.

The most successful "losers" I know are those who lost weight slowly by making changes in their daily lifestyle. They lost weight 1 pound at a time, one day at a time.

These people were unknowingly incorporating principles outlined in the book "Success One Day at a Time" by motivational author John Maxwell. The gist of Maxwell's message is the secret of success is found in your daily routine. He believes that most people are not successful in their endeavors in life because they don't understand that the only way to achieve success is to do it one day at a time.

A couple of years ago, I modified Maxwell's "seven steps to success" and applied it to weight loss. Since many people are now in the New Year's resolution state of mind and since impatience is one reason why people fail to lose weight permanently, I felt it was worth sharing the seven steps again.

Make a daily commitment to your goal. Success does not come by losing a large amount of weight rapidly and then trying to maintain the weight loss. It comes from a daily commitment to slowly change unhealthy aspects of your lifestyle.

Instead of dieting, commit yourself to eating more fruits and vegetables. This will replace some of the unhealthy food you normally eat. Make a commitment to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity (start with 10 minutes). This is more realistic than jumping into two hours of exercise daily when you haven't exercised in 10 years.

Value the process more than the end result. Learn to enjoy eating healthy food. Take delight in the simple joy of moving your body. "Forget" about your weight loss. Do not obsess over it. If you focus only on losing weight, you will look upon sensible eating and exercise as "punishment"—something to be stopped when you lose your weight. Is it any wonder why people lose and gain weight in cycles?

Don't wait for inspiration. Maxwell quotes basketball great Jerry West as saying, "You can't get much done in life if you only work on the days when you feel good. People who go far do so because they motivate themselves and give life their best, regardless of how they feel. To be successful, persevere."

If you do your workout program only when you feel like it, I can guarantee that you will miss many days of exercise.

Also, many people lose weight for the wrong reasons. I know too many women who lose weight only because they suspect their husbands are fooling around. When the crisis is over, they promptly get back all the pounds they lost. Lose weight for yourself and no one else because you are worth it. You deserve to have a healthy and fit body.

Be willing to sacrifice pleasure for opportunity. Maxwell writes, "One of the greatest lessons is: Pay now, play later. For everything in life, you pay a price. You choose whether you will pay it on the front end or the back end. If you pay first, then you will enjoy greater rewards in the end—and those rewards taste sweeter."

"Sacrifice" now in your younger years by eating properly and exercising regularly, and you will reap the rewards later when you are older by enjoying quality life instead of being sick, tired and miserable.

Dream big

Maxwell believes that "the potential that exists within us is limitless and largely untapped. When you think of limits, you create them." You have to have faith that you can change your lifestyle and take control of your health. People who think, from the outset, that they aren't going to make it will fail. Your attitude determines your performance.

Keep in mind, however, that when it comes to weight loss, your "dreams" have to be realistic and healthy. Your dream will turn into a nightmare if you come from a stocky family and you wish to be as thin as model Kate Moss. Aim for a weight and measurement that is appropriate for you.

Plan your priorities. Maxwell observes, "One thing that all successful people have in common is that they have mastered the ability to manage their time. First and foremost, they have organized themselves."

Weight loss and fitness have to be among your life's priorities if you want to succeed. Successful people organize their busy schedules so they always have time to exercise. They plan ahead by eating something healthy before going to a party. They make an effort to bring "*baon*" to work if the cafeteria serves only greasy and high-calorie food.

Nothing of value comes without sacrifice. Nothing in life is free. No one achieves

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Many people are unable to maintain their weight loss regimen because they want instant success

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Alvin's friends like either apples or oranges or both. 4 of them like apples, 9 like oranges, and 3 like both apples & oranges. How many friends does Alvin have?

SAMPLE QUESTION for Grade 3

If you subtract B from A, the result is 13. If you subtract C from A, the result is 24. The total of A, B & C is 323. What are the values of A, B & C?

SAMPLE QUESTION for Grade 5

A younger brother has P670. His elder brother has P890. How much should the elder brother give his younger brother so that both have the same amount of money?

SAMPLE QUESTION for 1st year

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ANGELO Valenton, country manager of Philips Consumer Electronics, with several models during the product's media launch

By Alex Y. Vergara

SO you now look like a *suman* in your favorite pair of jeans and T-shirt after overindulging in calorie-laden fare over the holidays? If you can't seem to make both ends of your pants meet, Philips and Nike may have the solution to help you get back in shape in no time.

In a recent media conference at Gold's Gym in Makati, the two global giants announced they had teamed up to provide a new line of portable audio gear aimed at "pushing athletic activities to a higher level."

"It's a union of two leaders," said Angelo Valenton, country manager of Philips Consumer Electronics, "one in electronics, the other in sports apparel. We drew from this synergy to fill a need. As such, the products will soon be available in leading sports apparel stores as well."

Most experts agree that music helps keep an athlete in step and push him/her to the limits no matter how tough the workout is. For some reason, music soothes if not alleviates the rigors associated with intensive training.

Filling the gym with music

The new partners are thus, fusing their separate worlds to bring music to the sports buffs and fitness devotees.

And since music appeals to all shapes and sizes, even couch potatoes may be won over by Philips' line of "portable sport audio" (PSA).

What set apart the Philips' line of PSA that includes FM radio, MP3 and CD players from the competition are design and durability, said to be second to none.

Nike's expertise in designing and manufacturing sports apparel, helped the partnership come up with better, more ergonomically designed audio equipment for athletes and fitness enthusiasts.

CD-MP3 music at the palm of her hand

ARMED with an FM radio

Small and lightweight, Philips units are sleek and stylish and have stainless steel casings. They are easy to grip and the control buttons are made of rubber to protect them from sweat and moisture.

Each unit has a built-in shock protection for skip-free music even if the user engages in the most vigorous workout, short of plunging into a swimming pool or doing a triple somersault.

The Energizer Bunny has probably met its match in Philips' MP3 player, which can play back two hours of music and has a battery life of up to nine hours. The MP3-CD players are user-friendly and come with such accessories as remote control, hand strap and a so-called butterfly apparel clip for extra convenience and movement.

Those who can do without the MP3s and CDs have a smaller, sleeker alternative: an FM radio that comes with an armband and butterfly apparel clip.

It goes without saying that the different units come with a variety of headphones to allow users to listen to music while exercising.

Since they're lightweight and sporty, the headphones are suitable for both serious athletes and neophytes in the gym who aim for excellence or to simply fit again in their old clothes.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Dancing to life

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

JESSICA is a successful homemaker in her 50s. A long time ago, a promising career in banking came to an abrupt halt because she chose marriage over career. Being married to a man who believed that women were better seen than heard, she played the role of submissive wife and dutiful mother.

Thirty years passed and the children had grown up, gotten married and left the family home to live their own lives.

One morning, as she gazed at her reflection in the mirror, she began to cry. And cry she did until there seemed to be no more tears left to shed.

With a workaholic husband who spent most of his time in the outside world, she felt alone in her inner world. Plunged into depression, for years she survived on tranquilizers and fed on self-pity and bitterness. Her size expanded, her weight doubled and her wrinkles deepened. Finally, having nowhere else to go, she submitted herself to counseling.

In control

Along life's journey, according to psychotherapists, there will be innumerable crises—emotional, mental, spiritual, financial. And what determines the extent of damage in a person is one's resiliency. By today's standards, a crisis is simply stress. And how you respond to stress will determine its effect on you.

What to do when the sky seems to have fallen on you?

• Dance the dance of life. Grow in understanding and acceptance of who you are and who you are not. If you think the world is a painful place, change your perception now. Neither joyful or painful, this world is called a birthing place where spirit and body are born. And without pain, there is no joy. Try to stay away from interpretations of your experience. It simply is. Surrender to it.

• Enter the circle of grace by bringing love to yourself or another. (You have a choice to also enter the circle of fear by withholding love from yourself or another. But that's not the way to healing.)

• Open you heart. If you are tempted to judge or condemn yourself or someone, pause for a moment. Now, allow that same person into your heart. Bless even if you are tempted to condemn. This act of blessing alone can bring miracles into your life.

• Be flexible. Imagine a tree, its roots are deeply set into the ground yet its branches sway with the wind—not against it. Remember a universal law—even without great effort, when conditions are right for something to happen, it will happen. And even with the greatest of efforts, if conditions are not right, it will not happen. So, move with the wind.

• Detach from your attachments by becoming aware of your attachments. See how unhappy or unsatisfied you have become because your happiness is based on conditions. Which leads us to the ultimate law...

• Love unconditionally. Be rooted in the moment. Allow life to meet your needs as it flows through your being.

Letting go

When you allow music to fill your senses, you will automatically let go. Try Air on a G-String by Bach or "The Prayer" by Andrea Bocelli or Josh Groban. In your privacy, stand in the middle of the room and listen to the music. Don't stop yourself if your body wants to sway or move. Let go. Every possible emotion will flow through you. Don't be afraid. Let the tears flow. After the dance, you will feel cleansed—what they call catharsis. And if you feel a sudden surge of energy, good for you. This is the beginning of ecstasy.

Detox for a new you

Trust me, this regimen works. It will guarantee great skin and a flatter tummy. Moreover, you will feel lighter. Upon waking in the morning, take one glass of fresh *buko* juice (minus the meat, not chilled) every hour on the hour until sunset. In between, drink a glass of clean, purified water (again, not cold or chilled). At day's end, have a bowl of vegetable soup.

Recipe (Vegetable Soup): In a pan, throw in 5 cups of water, fresh Baguio or native *pechay*, 1 stalk celery, 5 sprigs of basil, a handful of parsley, a slice of ginger, 1 potato, carrot and tomato. Add ½ tsp of salt. After a 10-minute boil on low fire, puree the ingredients. Serve hot.

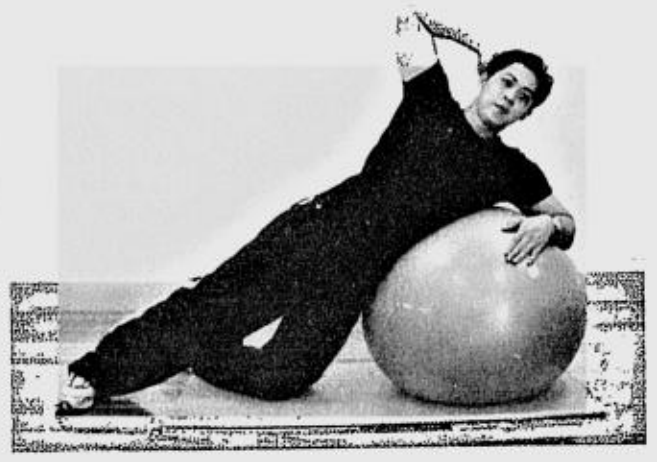
Here is a passage that will inspire us all... "Your life is a dance. It is neither good nor bad. It is a movement, a continuum. Your choice is a simple one. You can dance or not. Deciding not to dance will remove you from the dance floor. The dance will go on. Beyond the dance there is no meaning. Simply be open and present and you will fall into the arms of God..." The miracles will happen.

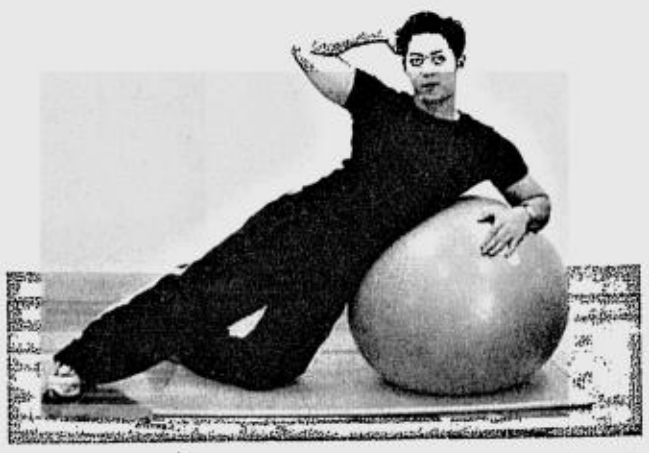
Love and light!

Reference: "Love Without Conditions—Reflections of Christ Mind" by Paul Ferrini

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Kneeling side crunch on stability ball





THIS exercise firms and tones the obliques, muscles which crisscross your waist.

Equipment:

Stability ball and exercise mat. As a substitute, you can do the exercise at the side of a bed.

Exercise technique:

1. Start by kneeling down with the ball on your left side. Extend your right leg sideways. Slowly roll the ball to the left and lower your body until your waist and hip are resting firmly against the ball. Place your left hand on the ball and your right hand behind your head. This is your starting position.

2. Crunch sideways slowly. Return to starting position. Do the desired number of repetitions.

3. To switch to the other side, bend your extended right leg and roll yourself back into a kneeling position. Put the ball on your other side and repeat the instructions.

Performance tips:

1. Avoid crunching by pulling on your head with your hand. Focus on contracting the obliques by bringing the bottom of your ribcage closer to the top of your hipbone.

2. Exhale as you do the side crunch; inhale as you return to starting position.

Repetitions:

Do 10 repetitions on each side.

Lose weight a pound at a time

From page C1

success without some discipline and sacrifice. This concept is so important that Maxwell stresses it twice. Losing weight doesn't mean starving yourself or depriving yourself of treats like ice cream and cake. After all, what would life be without these simple pleasures?

However, to lose weight and keep it off forever, you cannot eat these things on a daily basis unless you are blessed with a very fast metabolism and good genes to prevent high cholesterol levels. There will be more days when you have to make a choice to eat healthier and lower calorie food intake, but there will also be some days when you can indulge and enjoy them without any guilt.

The best weight loss is slow

Traditional weight-loss advice says 2 pounds a week is a realistic amount to aim for. This is usually true when you first start to lose weight, but after the initial 10 pounds, researchers say it is more like half a pound a week. So, relax. Take your time. Every day, you are getting closer to your goal. Remember the fable about the tortoise and the hare? Success is for those who go one step at a time, one day at a time, and 1 pound at a time.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Lessons in wine-tasting—and spitting

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

THE POPULAR Tyrell's, one of Australia's older wineries, was on our wine-tasting itinerary when we visited the world-renowned Hunter Valley Down Under. Tyrell's superbly knowledgeable marketing person, fun Irishman **Murray Flannagan**, explained in detail how their wine was processed. He said oak barrels from France and the United States gave the same flavor, although our wine diva, **Karen Santos**, insisted that "the French oak barrels were 'classier.'"

Flannagan answered, "The only difference is French oak could be used for both red and white wine, while American oak could not." After three years, the oak barrels from a 100-year-old tree lost their flavor so it would be the same to use stainless steel barrels instead.

We were handed three Chardonnays —2003, 1997 and 1993. The 1993 vintage, which had a hint of vanilla, won our approval. Flannagan later informed us that this vintage won 13 gold medals. We were apparently getting better at wine tasting and, yes, even spitting!

The Pinot Noir was also handed to us, a 2002 and 1999. Flanaggan said "this would be ideal as a lunch wine, being light."

Our last wine tasting session in our three-day sojourn was at the Rothbury Estate of **Neil McGuigan**, who is super famous in Hunter Valley. Neil personally accompanied us to the cellars to try more types of wine directly from the stainless steel barrels.

Later, Neil made us try something new, which turned out to be a "voigner," something not commonly grown in Hunter Valley. He also showed us how to spit as far as one could. (No one could match his spitting skills. The closest one was **Bea Zobel Jr.**, who spat with so much elegance.)

Lunch was at the Bimbadgen Estate restaurant, where we had more wine and celebrated the birthday of **Greg Wall**. **Ruth** and **Arnold Co** presented him with an autographed CD of **Michael Bublé**.

'Beer-ing' it

Back at Cypress Lakes, the staff prepared an Asian buffet in our honor, along with—surprise!—more wine. Here, most of us opted for beer and fresh fruit juices. No one had wine, would you believe?

Back in Sydney, our preggy pal, Preview's editor **Pauline Juan**; the Philippine Star's **Lynette Corporal**; fun man **Johnny Litton**; my exercise partners, businessman **Joel Uichico**, **Margarita Fores** and Karen S.; with Le Soufflé's **Jesse Sincioco** and Top of the City **Florabel Co** and sultry **Rita Dy**, together with our hosts Ruth and Arnold Co, jetted back home. **Pepper Teehankee**, **Tim Yap**, **Sander** and **Mons Tantoco**, and *moi* stayed on for a couple of days more at Sydney's newly remodeled Shangri-La Hotel, where Shangri-La Makati's mega dame of decorum, **Joy Wassmer**, was entertaining another batch of Manille's press folks for a look-see of Shangri-La that has the most breathtaking view of the whole of Sydney.

Jetting back home via Cathay Pacific through Hong Kong was kind of long, especially on economy, but great if you want to stretch your legs with a couple of days' stay to shop and check out the restos in that city.

Yes, *palanggas*, we learned more from experience than what we would have from reading a book. It's great to have the Hunter Valley Wine Society now in the Philippines, providing us with quality wines from Australia.

Give **Dyana Domingo** a buzz at 6877964 and 6374958, or e-mail huntervalleyws@mail.com for details on how to become a member.

Arbiter of style and taste

Barely two years in existence, already the Philippine Tatler has become the acknowledged arbiter of high society lifestyle, good taste and glamour, leading the way by living and celebrating life as it was meant to be.

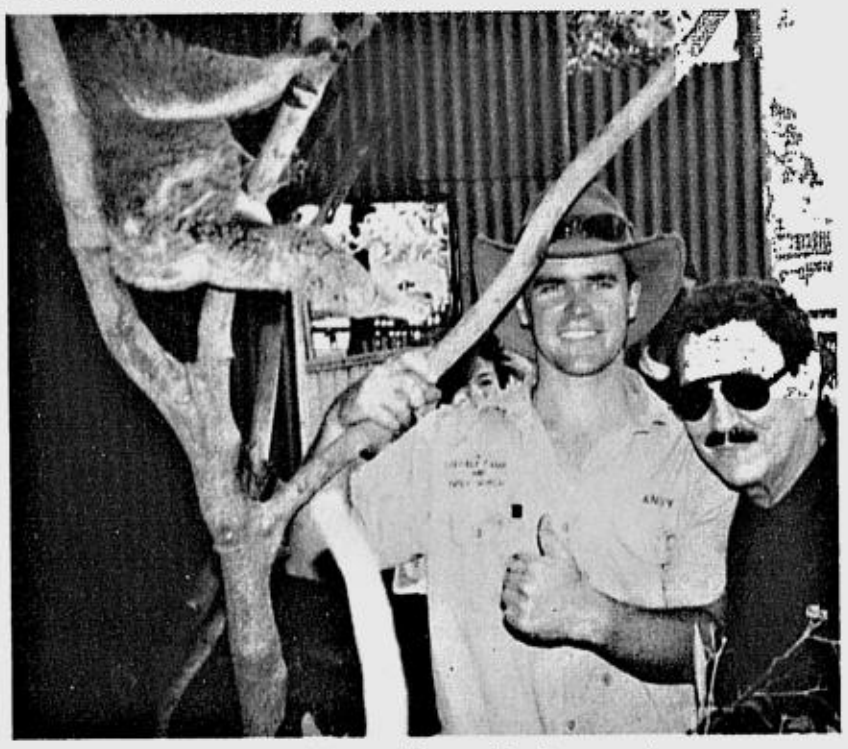
Now hot on the heels of the successful local launch of Couture, possibly the best fashion magazine in the market today, comes another feather in the cap of the Tatler group. At 6 p.m. tomorrow, a select group of socialites, watch connoisseurs and collectors has been privileged to be chosen to attend the Philippine launch of the coffee-table book "World of Time," *palanggas*.

This one-of-a-kind volume highlights "the histories, the latest models and the classics, and profiles the creative geniuses behind some of the world's most esteemed watch brands."

The elegant Mandarin Oriental Manila's Grand Ballroom will be the place of happening and the event will be hosted by Johnny Litton and *moi* who just happens to be Philippine Tatler's lifestyle and social editor, as if you didn't know, dahlings. Exciting raffle prizes, including three valuable timepieces, are at stake. And if that ain't enough, dahlings, chanteuse **Menchu Lauchengco** will surely be an added treat. *Naturellement* not everyone can win the raffle but don't worry, *palanggas*, the invitees will not go home empty-handed as guests will receive complimentary copies of the "World of Time."

Check out the "World of Time" in selected bookstores.

CRUISING around Darling Bay in Sydney at sunset: (front row) Karen Santos, Margarita Fores, Tim Yap, Marge Enriquez and Pepper Teehankee; (back) Mons and Sander Tantoco, club director Mauricio Alcon and Preview's Pauline Suaco-Juan; (last row) Lynette Corporal of Philippine Star, Jesse Sincioco and Florabel Co



AT the fun Kangaroo and Koala Farm with a good-looking caretaker

ENJOYING the dinner at the fab Café Sydney are Pauline Suaco-Juan and Jesse Sincioco

MORE wine for Karen Santos and Bea Zobel Jr. before the dinner at the five-star Robert's Restaurant

OB-Gyn fellowships

THE PERINATAL Center announces the availability of fellowship plantilla positions in Perinatology and Pediatric Adolescent Gynecology.

Applicants who finished a four-year residency program in Obstetrics-Gynecology in an accredited training center may send their application to Dr. Lillian V. Lee, executive director of the Philippine Children's Medical Center, Quezon Ave., QC, not later than Jan. 15.

The fellowship program in Perinatology is a two-year course on diagnosis, management and research on high-risk pregnancies. After the program, the fellow is expected to be proficient in fetal surveillance, management of complications of pregnancy, interventional procedures, diagnosis and management of the high-risk mother, fetus and newborn.

The two-year fellowship in Pediatric Adolescent Gynecology will develop skills, knowledge and expertise on gynecologic problems of children. Children of different ages have different physiologic characteristics which a specialist in pediatric gynecology can understand and manage adequately. Call 9240855 or fax 9247952.

New Licauco book

WHAT were the pagan origins of some Christian teachings? What really happened in the Garden of Eden? What was the "fruit of knowledge" that Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat?

Is there some proof of a romantic relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene?

These and many other questions are discussed in Jaime T. Licauco's latest book, "On Christianity, New Age, and Reincarnation (New Perspectives on Old Religious Issues)," to be launched Jan. 16 at Mag:Net Gallery and Magazine Shop, ELJ Building, ABS-CBN Compound, Eugenio Lopez Jr. Street, QC.

Call Anvil Publishing at 7471622 or 6375692.

NU SKIN Phils. offers LifePak, a multi-vitamin and mineral dietary supplement. Aside from calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, copper, selenium, manganese and other minerals, it also contains nutrients that promote cellular protection and regeneration. Call 6890333.

The diplomat who remembers his past lives

Part 2

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

"THE MEMORY of my past life started with people close to me," said Carlos A.L. de Carvalho, a Brazilian lawyer and career diplomat.

"For example, I remember my past lives with my parents. We have been together for the last 6,000 years, always the three of us.

"Most of the time, my past life is shown to me while looking at the mirror. My facial features would change to reveal who I was before.

"It was in the mirror that I first saw my past incarnation as a high priest of the Egyptian god, Ptah, during the time of Akhnaton and Nefertiti. My name was Saddji. Ptah was the great initiator in charge of the ceremony of the little death, which was really a preparation for astral journey."

Carlos is well aware of the tremendous flight of fantasy and mental confusion that people have regarding their past lives. "I have met many women who claim to be the reincarnation of Nefertiti. Well, I have news for them! Nefertiti has not yet reincarnated back to earth. One time I was challenged to prove this, and Nefertiti appeared or materialized before us!

"Everybody thinks he is a reincarnation of some great personage in history, like Napoleon or Julius Caesar. Nobody wants to be a common person or peasant in a previous life."

But there are more ordinary or common people than famous ones, isn't it? "For example," continued Carlos, "I saw myself in one previous incarnation as a clown! Yes, I was a clown once, and why should I deny that?"

"That's in fact a nice profession, isn't it," I said, "to be able to make people laugh and forget their troubles?"

Carlos agreed with me.

"In another lifetime I saw myself in 19th-century Spain as a famous ballerina. I was so beautiful that my husband committed suicide because of jealousy. In this lifetime, I met the same man, and this time, I saved him from committing suicide again."

From Lemuria

Carlos also saw himself in the mirror as an antedeluvian man from Lemuria. "I was a big black man with a thick beard."

Then Carlos asked me if I knew that the Philippines was part of Lemuria. I said yes, and told him I even saw a map of Lemuria, and the Philippines was in it. And this could explain why in the Philippines there are so many healers, psychics, clairvoyants, mediums and spirits.

Lemuria was known for two things, high telepathic powers and high spirituality, which present-day Filipinos are known for.

"Don't you find your belief in reincarnation to be in conflict with your profession and your Catholic religion?" I asked Carlos.

"Not at all," he replied instantly. "I've always been very discreet about my personal beliefs. And as far as religion is concerned, you yourself pointed out in a recent newspaper column that the Catholic Church has not formally condemned belief in reincarnation."

Indeed, I could find no single encyclical or Papal Bull that rejects or condemns belief in reincarnation as a heresy. As far as I could gather, the only time it was formally discussed by the Church hierarchy was during the 2nd Council of Constantinople, otherwise known in Church history as the 5th Ecumenical Council convened by Emperor Justinian without the consent of Pope Vigilus I.

In fact, the Pope did not even attend a single session of that council. During that council, the works of Origen, the greatest theologian of the early Christians, and who believed in some form of reincarnation, was anathematized.

However, as Geddes McGregor, D.D., pointed out, some modern Christian thinkers and theologians are of the opinion that the questionable resolutions against Origen are not binding to the Christian faithful of today.

Two sides of religion

De Carvalho pointed out that there are always two sides to any religion, the esoteric (or hidden) and exoteric (or public).

"The esoteric side of Christianity has always accepted reincarnation. And even in some of the practices of the Catholic Church, we can see the workings of esoteric truths. Let's take the use of quartz crystals by the Church. Why is amethyst used in the ring of the Pope? Because the violet color of the amethyst represents the highest spiritual color. And the Church knows the significance of amethyst for subtle telecommunications. That's why the Pope's ring is destroyed or smashed upon his death, to prevent his successor from calling on his spirit. As my yoga teacher used to say, the amethyst ring is like having a telephone line to the other side. And the Church forbids invoking the spirit of the dead."

"When you invited me to be a guest in your radio program (over dzMM) I asked permission from my spirit guides and to my surprise they have gave me permission to accept, saying 'It is now time for you to come out,'" said Carlos.

"Thank goodness your guides gave you permission, otherwise this story would never have been written," I said to him. Carlos merely smiled back at me.

"One last question," I said. "You have an adopted grownup son who is a Thai. However, you yourself do not have a natural child and you never got married. Why?"

Carlos smiled and replied, "I remember what the great psychologist, Dr. Hans Ludwig Lipmann, told me. 'Carlos, your love for humanity is greater than your love for any particular person. And no woman can put up with that.'"

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati. Call 8107245 or 8926806. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to his dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

The 'quacks' of PGH

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

A HEART disease may suggest a person consumed with hatred. Abuse of power can whack the liver. Goiter may mean suppressed emotions while poor vision can be an indication of too much awareness of life's difficulties.

Diseases have a purpose—a life lesson, a wake-up call, according to Ricardo Maria Teves, one of three magnetic healers at the Philippine General Hospital's (PGH) Traditional and Integrative Medicine Clinic.

"You [will need] a second level of consciousness to see things extraordinarily. Your reality becomes your consciousness, and you become aware of something different and bigger. Your reality is already there but it may not be that real," Teves says.

That's right, within the walls of an institution dedicated to conventional—also called "western or northern"—medicine, a nondescript nook is designated for people who could be the local equivalent of "X-filers" Dana Scully and Fox Mulder who believe the truth is somewhere out there.

They are the "weirdos" of the PGH, the "quacks," jokes Teves' young colleague Samuel Tan, among the medical doctors. Ironically, most of their patients so far are doctors and nurses who run to them for relief when all else fails. "And we fix them good," Tan proudly says.

Teves and his co-magnetic healers subscribe to the view that the body has natural bioelectric magnetic energy, which has to maintain its balance for good health. When the balance is upset, meaning the energy is low, that's when illness occurs.

Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, the former health secretary, explains that the balance can be upset by various causes. The only medical doctor who does acupuncture/pressure, Galvez Tan brought the team to PGH two years ago to give its patients additional treatment options.

He says disease is not always a physical disorder. "Stress, emotional, psychological and social problems, the environment, etc., can make a person sick," he adds.

Magnetic healing aims to restore the body's energy balance through several interventions like a change in lifestyle and/or diet, stress management, herbal remedies. Depending on the ailment, one therapy may be given focus more than the others but often a combination of methods will be used.

Not the alternative

The trio of magnetic healers stresses what they do is not alternative medicine. "We are not here to replace [conventional] medicine. We work with them [western medicine practitioners] so we can have a long-lasting, permanent cure for illnesses," says Mabel Tecson, the third member of the team.

Magnetic healing is meant to complement other cures and will not conflict with procedures and regimens used by medical doctors. But it can also be a stand-alone therapy depending on the cause of the problem.

Teves explains that many ailments have root causes related to a person's lifestyle and issues—like anger or hatred—that need to be resolved. Unless such issues are settled, any cure will not be effective.

The clinic strictly adheres to the holistic approach. Its goal is to bring balance, unity and harmony among the three components that make up a human—body, mind and spirit.

Before treatment, preliminary medical tests are required, with special attention given to lifestyle and diet.

"We treat patients as individuals, not as case histories," Tecson says. They even do house calls when patients cannot go to the clinic. This personalized service sets the PGH traditional clinic apart from other "alternative" centers in town.

There is consultation before, during or after a treatment session. The healers teach patients the advantages of lifestyle changes, like giving up smoking or drinking or staying out late.

Meditation is also taught, says Tecson, as well as visualization, especially for cancer sufferers. "For spiritual treatments, sometimes we pray over our patients—if they are open to that idea," she says. Healing, she adds, is not complete without a spiritual connection.

Food energy

The team also teaches diet therapy. "We deal with the energy form of the body. Most health problems will be handled by a simple change in diet," says Tan. They explain why being vegetarian is advisable—patients become healthy because the energy they get from the food is clean. In a nutshell: "Live" food lends its life and the body is revitalized.

Since people eat the energy that comes with the food, patients are taught proper food choices. Tan compares the vegan way to growing a tree. "You have to learn the concept of how everything works. If you give a tree proper nutrition, sunlight and water, it will grow nicely."

For people who would rather die than become vegetarians, the team instead teaches them how to make healthy food choices and their preparation. "If they can't prepare the food themselves we go to their houses and teach their cooks. We also teach them how to grow herbs and vegetables. If they have gardeners we teach their gardeners," says Tecson.

Treatment program might include medication using indigenous herbs. Tecson says they research native plants, those used by the local *arbulario*, since what is grown in a particular area often has the properties the people there need. "They may be treated like food supplements *pero magugulat ka* because these immunity boosters will heal you. *'Pag na*-prime *'yung* immunity *mo, susunod agad 'yung* healing process," she says.

Most people see traditional medicine as the last resort—when conventional treatment fails or when there is concern about side effects, or to avoid surgery. But says Teves: "What have they got to lose?"

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

MABEL Tecson cleansing a patient's aura

DR. Jaime Galvez Tan performs acupunture.

PGH'S FAB FOUR. Samuel Tan, Mabel Tecson, Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan and Ricardo Maria Teves

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Our MEDICard program includes coverage for childbirth but is only on a reimbursement basis. If my wife happens to give birth under the services of a non-accredited doctor, are we still eligible for this benefit?

Since the maternity assistance benefit is on a reimbursement basis, you are entitled to it regardless of whether your wife was confined in a non-accredited hospital or is under the care of a non-accredited doctor. The amount of maternity assistance shall be based on the provisions and inner limits in your healthcare agreement.

Meet your MEDICard Team

MEDICard members can seek the services of **Dr. Carmela Maria C. Ledesma** for their needed OB-Gynecological consultations. Doktora Cherry finishsed Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas and took her residency training for her specialization at Medical City General Hospital from 1983 to 1987. She has been an accredited provider since 1999. Members may visit her at the Medical City Satellite Clinic at the ground floor of the Ever Gotesco Mall, Ortigas Ext. in Pasig City. Doc Cherry holds clinic every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2 to 4 in the afternoon.

Dr. Maria Doreen J. Ambrosio is MEDICard's accredited specialist at the World Citi Medical Center in Quezon City. Dr. Ambrosio, a UST College of Medicine graduate, specializes in Internal Medicine. She finished her residency training for the latter at Medical City General Hospital. She also subspecializes in Pulmonary Medicine which she finished at the Lung Center for Asia. For consultations, visit Dr. Ambrosio's clinic at Room 219, Mondays to Saturdays from 10 AM to 12 noon.

Members residing in the Laguna area can visit Internist **Dr. Michelle A. Corpus** at Evangelista Medical Specialty Hospital for their needed consultations. This recently accredited medical provider is a graduate of Medicine from the University of Santo Tomas. She received her training for Internal Medicine at the Manila Doctors Hospital. She also subspecializes in Gastroenterology. Her clinic at Room 105 is open every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 5 PM, Fridays from 12 noon to 2 PM and Saturdays, 1 to 4 PM. Evangelista Hospital is located at Macaria Ave., cor. J. P. Rizal St., Pacita Complex I, Laguna.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 812-8360, 817-5136 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031; For Davao Sales Office call (082) 224-6931/305-3386.

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Ultrasound training for trainers

THE WORLD Federation of Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (WFUMB) will conduct an ultrasound course for trainers, Jan. 21-23, at the Philippine Children's Medical Center audiovisual room.

Part of its Asian Educational Project, the course's faculty will be: radiologist Dr. Byung Ihn Choi, WFUMB vice president and president-elect of the Asian Federation of Societies of Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (AFSUMB), director of Asian Educational Project; urologist Dr. Hiroki Watanabe, past president of WFUMB, AFSUMB; Dr. Leandro Fernandez, president, Federation of Latin American Ultrasound Societies (FLAWS), sonologist; Dr. Kittipong Vairajanabong, president, AFSUMB; Dr. Masatoshi Kudo of Japan; and Dr. Glenn McNally, OB-Gyn, from Australia.

Coordinating the training is the Philippine Society of Ultrasound in Clinical Medicine Inc. (PSUCMI) headed by president Dr. Corazon Yabes-Almirante and an affiliate of WFUMB and AFSUMB.

Thirty applicants qualified as trainers. The others would be observers.

Dr. Eric Talens, overall chair of the second PSUCMI Annual Convention to be held Jan. 24-25, said the ultrasound experts would also lecture during the convention.

Call 9246601 local 284 (course); 9240855, 9246601 local 267 (convention), fax 9247952 or 3723358, or e-mail psucmi@yahoo.com.

'Abalos packaged ₱1.3-billion computer contract' Story below, COL. 2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, January 14, 2004 ★★ 52 pages / 5 sections / vol. 19 / no. 37 P15

Spare trees, pols told

By Volt Contreras

POLITICIANS, stay away from that tree. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday appealed to all candidates in the forthcoming elections to desist from "crucifying" hapless trees

SPARE/ A4

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 5 Pangasinan cop chiefs sacked over 'jueteng' ACROSS /A17
- Mirant readies P18-B public offering BUSINESS /B1
- Comelec: Bro. Eddie in NEWS /A9

SC ruling leaves May polls in a mess

Comelec computer contract nullified

By Philip C. Tubeza

BLAMING the Commission on Elections for placing national elections "at grave risk," the Supreme Court yesterday scrapped the controversial P1.3-billion contract for automated polls.

The high court also ordered the Ombudsman to investigate the criminal liability of those involved, and the solicitor general to recover the P849,167,697.41 that had already been spent for the project.

"The illegal, imprudent and hasty actions of the commission have not only desecrated legal and jurisprudential norms, but have also cast serious doubts upon the poll body's ability and capacity to conduct automated elections," the high court said.

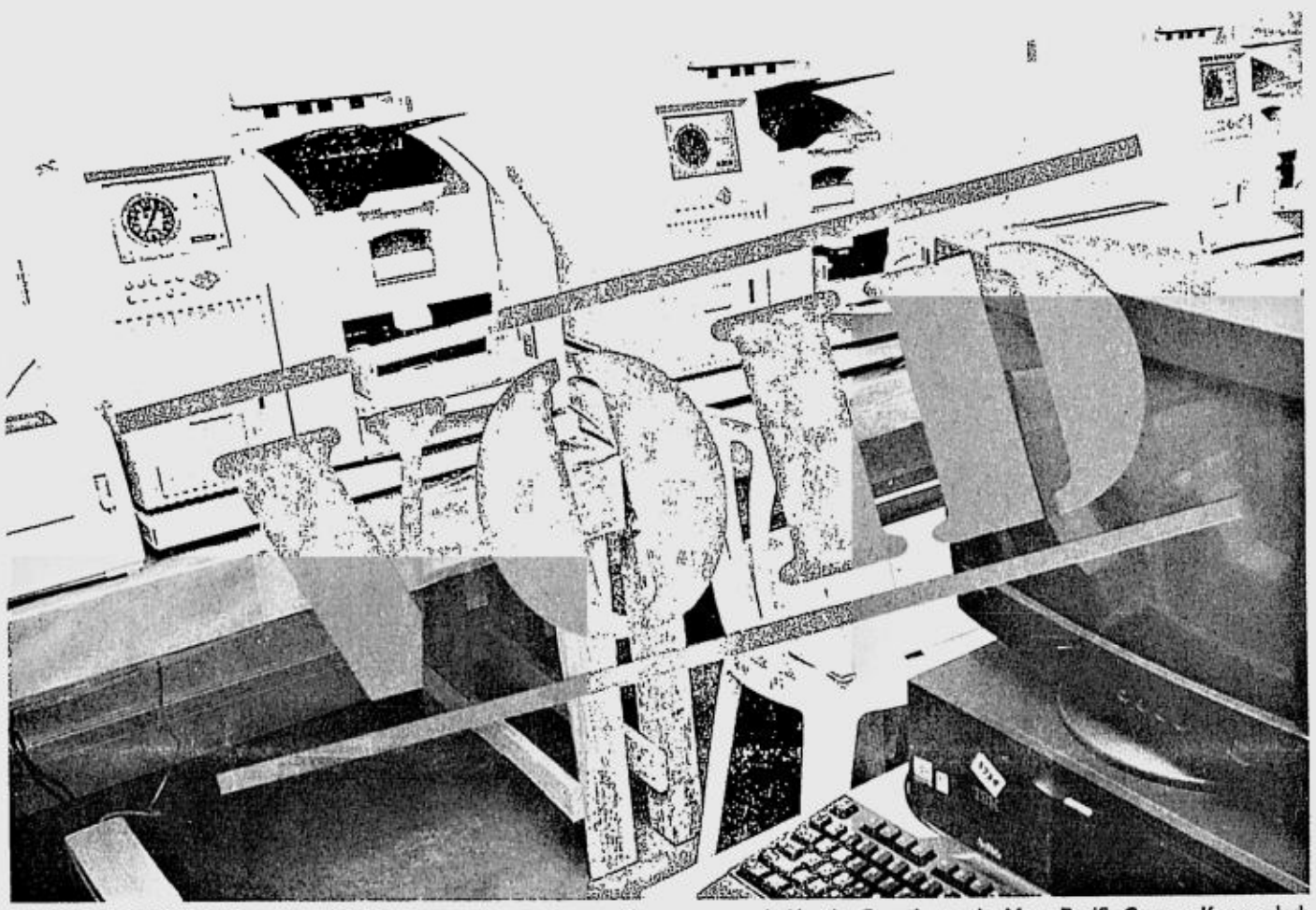
In a strongly worded *(See Page A20)* 101-page decision, the court en banc voided the Comelec's contract with Mega-Pacific eSolutions (MPEI) after it found that the Comelec violated the law and its own bidding rules when it awarded the contract.

The high court also found MPEI's counting machines to be vulnerable "to election fraud on a massive scale by means of just a few key strokes."

The court voted 9-3-2, with three justices dissenting and two asking for more time.

This marks the second time the high court voided an election

SC RULING/ A20



THE P1.3-B CONTRACT to supply 2,700 automated counting machines was awarded by the Comelec to the Mega Pacific Corp., a Korean-led consortium. The poll body's P3-B modernization program is structured into 3 phases: voters validation system, automated counting and canvassing, electronic transmission/consolidation and dissemination of results. PDI PHOTO/ERIK ARAZAS

It's back to manual counting of votes

By Michael Lim Ubac
Margaux C. Ortiz
and Cyntia D. Balana

ALL are resigned to manual counting of votes although the Supreme Court did not say that the Commission on Elections should go back to the 50-year-old system. But not everyone agrees that the May 10 elections should be postponed.

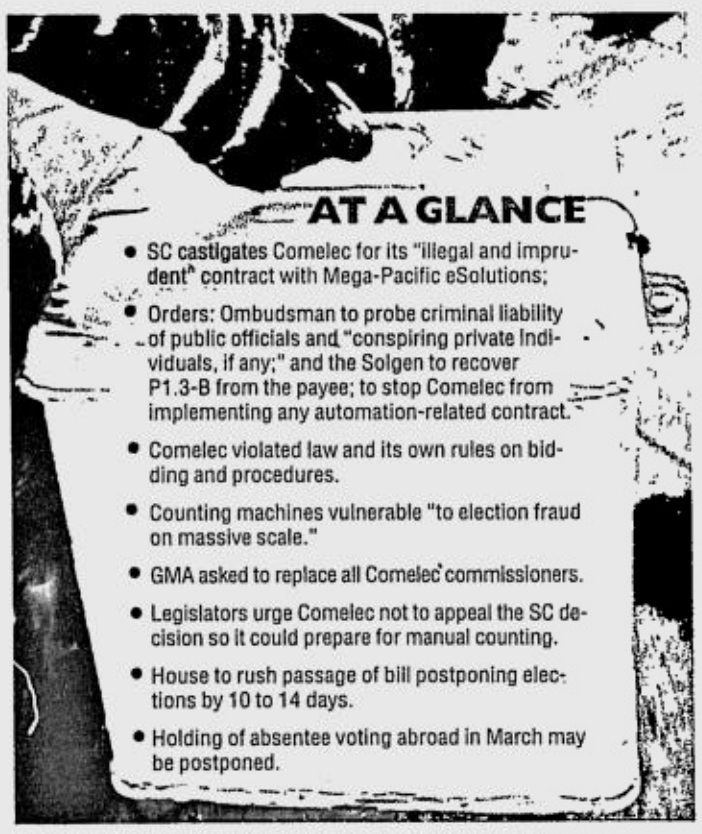
"Mano-mano (manual) tayo," opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday enunciated the sentiments of both opposition and administration senators following the Supreme Court ruling invalidating the Comelec's contract with a consortium for automated counting.

Pimentel said the Comelec would just have to print and distribute the ballots and appoint poll watchers. He urged the Comelec to use the reservists of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for poll watching duties instead of tapping public school teachers.

The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) said the Comelec should bite the bullet and make the shift to manual counting.

IT'S BACK/ A8

'Abalos packaged ₱1.3-B contract'



A BRIEF on the Supreme Court's decision and its consequences. PDI PHOTO

By Jerry Esplanada

BENJAMIN Abalos himself "packaged" the P1.3-billion contract for computerization, according to one of the petitioners who filed the automated polls case against the Commission on Elections.

The source also alleged that a "Korean supplier-friend" of Abalos', when he was still chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, helped the Comelec chief in packaging the deal.

Abalos, a former Mandaluyong City mayor, headed the MMDA from January to August 1990. He was reappointed to the same position in January 2001 by President Macapagal-Arroyo. In June 2002, he was named chair of the Comelec, the constitutional agency responsible for the conduct of all elections.

Another source, from the information technology community, pointed to Eduardo Mejos, chair of the Comelec bids and awards committee, when asked for additional information on the deal.

"[Mejos] should know. He was the top finance official of MMDA during Abalos' term. He's already retired but Chairman Abalos brought him to the Comelec. There, he became chairman of the bids [and awards] committee," the source also said.

Attempts last night to contact the agency, through Mejos, proved futile when a member of his staff said they were told that he would not be giving any comment for the moment.

"That Korean supplier was the one who introduced him to another Korean supplier who's part of the consortium that won the bidding," the first source said.

The petitioner was apparently referring to the South Korean IT provider SK C & C Co. Ltd.

The same source also disclosed that the Mega Pacific Consortium grouped "Comelec suppliers of ballot papers and boxes during the past 10 years."

Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. is the majority partner of a consortium composed of SK C & C Co. Ltd., WeSolv Open Computing Inc., Election.com Ltd. and ePLDT.

The consortium has supplied Comelec a total of 1,991 auto-

ABALOS/ A8

How now? Poll body confused

By Martin P. Marfil

SHOULD the government consider the P1.3 billion paid for the machines lost? Will that mean a shift to manual elections?

Will the Commission on Elections procure ballot boxes for manual counting? How will this affect overseas voting which will start in March? Can we use the ballots for the automated elections for manual elections?

These were some of the questions that surfaced yesterday as Comelec officials tried to get more details about the Supreme Court decision voiding the contract for automated counting machines.

Most of the questions, left unanswered, were raised by mid-level Comelec executives who admitted they were sur-

HOW/ A8

No money for GMA 'telenovela'

By Alcuin Papa

"GLORIA" has packed up.

A *telenovela* of that title on the life and times of President Macapagal-Arroyo has been shelved for lack of funding, according to a member of the production team.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, yesterday told the INQUIRER that the *telenovela* was to have been shown in 40 30-minute episodes with teen idol Jolina Magdangal and superstar Nora Aunor playing the subject in her youth and in her prime, respectively.

It was to have been aired on the 6 p.m. prime-time slot over RPN-9, NBN-4 and IBC-13, all government-owned and -controlled networks, and government radio station Radyo ng Bayan, and ended just before the Feb. 10 start of the official campaign period for national candidates so as not to violate the rules laid down by the Commission on

NO/ A4

US plans to file antitrust case vs RP telecom firms; GMA mad

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.
and Abigail L. Ho

THE MOVE of the US Department of Justice to summon 30 Filipino telecommunication executives attending a conference in Hawaii is part of the groundwork for the filing of an antitrust case against Philippine telecommunication firms, according to the Philippine ambassador to the United States.

"The US justice department is conducting an independent investigation to ascertain whether there have been violations of the antitrust law," Ambassador Albert del Rosario told the INQUIRER yesterday. "The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has indicated that this is being done on a totally independent basis."

Del Rosario said that from the information obtained by his office in Washington, the US justice department was looking into the possibility that there was collusion among Philippine companies when they raised termination rates by 50 percent to 12 US cents per minute for land line calls and by 33 percent to 16 cents per minute for mobile phone calls.

Termination rates are the fees charged by Philippine firms for

US PLANS/ A4

THE HONOLULU incident is explained by US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone to DFA Secretary Delia Albert, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and RP envoy to the US Albert del Rosario. EDWIN BACASMAS

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